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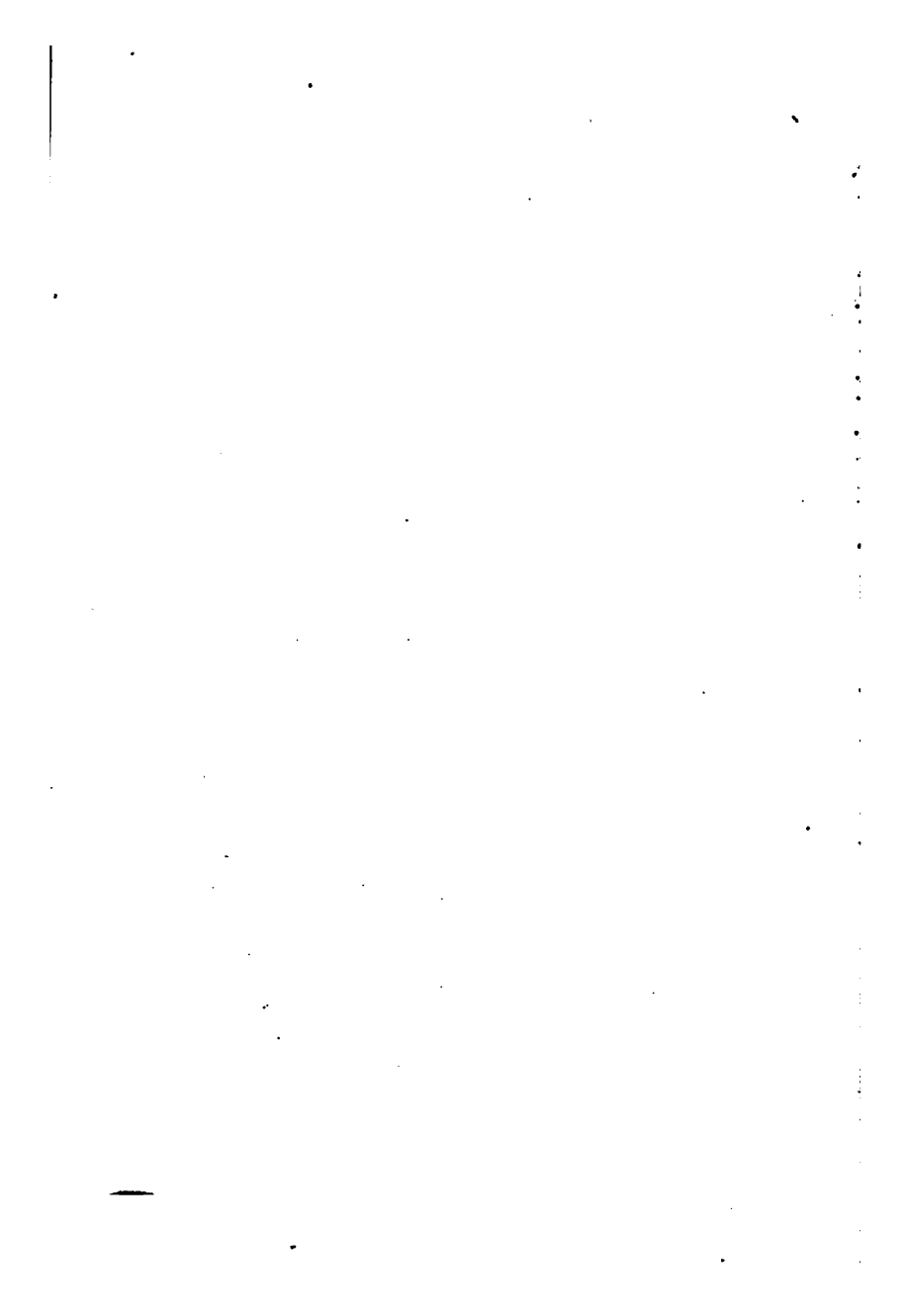
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ROUND-ROBIN SERIES

His Second Campaign

Maurice Thompson



BOSTON

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1883

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HIS SECOND CAMPAIGN.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD MILL.

AN old mill, mossy from roof-comb to stony base, was rumbling and growling beside its brook. A big overshot waterwheel, seemingly much out of proportion to the rest of the building, slowly revolved with the gushing and gurgling water filling its slimy buckets.

Some wide-armed oaks and slender pines grew all about. In every direction mountain peaks rose against the blue North Georgia sky. The air had all the freshness and fragrance of the South.

The mill fronted eastward, looking down a narrow fertile valley, now just beginning to clothe itself in vernal splendors of leaf and flower; along the sinuous channel of the brook grew clumps of willows overtopped, here and there, by white-armed plane-trees and gnarled tulips, there called poplars.

A few humble houses, the homes of poor farmers, were scattered along the slopes of the valley, which

was not more than three miles in its greatest width, and which cut through the mountains, some five miles east of the mill, by a jagged gap called the "mouth of the Pocket."

Such fields as had been opened for cultivation in this little valley or "pocket," were tilled up against the mountain sides, and lay red and brown in the sunlight, save where the wheat and rye had made them a tender green. The forests of oak, hickory and pine ran in variegated billows to the very tops of the mountains. Wild flowers grew everywhere. In fact, no other region can compare with the hill country of North Georgia for the variety and loveliness of its wild flowers. Its woods and fields are gay with them from early spring until the drought of midsummer kills them.

Mocking-birds, brown thrushes, cat-birds, cardinal grosbeaks and many other sweet-voiced birds were filling the "pocket" with song.

Beside the door of the old mill, in the shade of a mulberry-tree now just getting its broad tender leaves, sat a dark-faced man, whose eyes had in them that peculiar gloominess which comes of long indulgence in retrospection and discontent. It was easy to see that he was a cripple. An iron-shod wooden leg protruded from one division of his jeans trowsers, and a heavy walking-staff lay across his lap. His face was not unattractive, with its broad, high forehead, its well-turned jaws and its aristocratic nose and chin. There was a suggestion of unavailable power in it. The heavy gray mus-

tache drooped over a full, almost sensual, mouth, in whose corners lurked the merest hint of that haughtiness which was so marked an element in the personal outline of the high-bred Southerner of the *ante-bellum* days. That he was a wreck which the late war had left stranded here in this sweet Southern valley, could be discovered by a glance. Before the war he had been the owner of many slaves, a magnificent mountain home, and a broad plantation farther "down the country," as the phrase went. Now he was the owner of the little old mossy "Pocket Mill," whose big dripping wheel and rasping buhr-stones served to grind out for him and his family a humble subsistence. His two daughters aided him to serve the customers who brought their grain thither for grinding. His sons had all been killed in battle. An invalid wife helped to sadden his exile — for this life of poverty over here in the "pocket" was to Colonel Wilton Chenier, despite all its color and perfume, its bird-songs and its breezy freshness, nothing less than exile. He did not chafe, however, as the days and months and years creeping by gave him no promise of any better fortune, but quietly and gloomily accepted his fate. To-day as he sat there smoking his brier-root pipe, and reading a novel, his face was no more nor no less hopeful than it was twelve years before, when he first came to live at the mill, just as the war-clouds lifted, and peace brought with it utter penury to him and his loved ones.

It is early May and early morning. The smoke

from Colonel Wilton Chenier's pipe goes swiftly away on a fresh stream of mountain air that dips into the valley as if blowing out of that wonderful blue sky which hangs overhead. A tall, dark woman, still lithe and youthful in appearance, despite her thirty-five years and the look of settled sorrow in her face, comes out of the mill, with some light work in her hand, and sits down upon a weather-beaten bench beside her father. You would at once know that she is the daughter of this man, she is so like him. As she bends over her sewing, her features fall into their habitual retrospective repose. Her hair and eyes are black, her nose small and straight, her mouth and chin well formed, her forehead low and broad. They make a strange, dark picture, these two sorrowful-looking forms, outlined against the dull background of the old mill's mossy wall. They do not seem to note each other's presence. The growling of the mill is enlivened by the song of a mocking-bird up in the mulberry-tree. An ivory-billed woodpecker is cackling merrily on the great oak yonder by the brook. From some indefinite distance comes the mellow tinkling of a cow-bell. A healthy imagination would make of this secluded "pocket" a retreat fit for the indwelling of fauns and dryads, a dreaming-place for Theocritus; but utter discontent broods in the faces of this father and daughter. Evidently they are unaware of all this riant beauty with which the warm Southern valley is flooded.

As Colonel Chenier in the course of his reading

rustled the leaves of his novel, his daughter would now and then turn a slow glance upon him, as if of habitual inquiry and pity. Such had been the monotony of their lives for the past twelve years. Silent commiseration of each other's lot, nothing new from day to day; the rumbling of the mill, the singing of the birds, the dreamy sweetness of that incomparable climate, the deep isolation of the "pocket:" morning, noon, night,—nothing more, save their retrospections.

Suddenly a few strong notes from a banjo came out of the mill. The man and woman looked up, a half smile lighting their gloomy faces. They always smiled when they heard the sound of that banjo, for the player was the life of the old mill's household.

Colonel Chenier ceased reading, and Adelaide, his sad-faced daughter, let fall her sewing, as they both gazed upon a lovely apparition now passing out through the wide doorway of the mill. It was Rosalie Chenier, the Colonel's youngest child. She held in her hand a banjo of fine workmanship, dark, old, with jewelled keys and polished silver screws. She sat down on the stone step and began to play a lively medley, made up of concordant bits snatched from this and that familiar old tune, a sort of mocking-bird performance, which threw together the cheeriest parts of many pieces she knew.

She was beautiful, in the best sense of the word, from head to foot. Without lacking anything of a strong, almost voluptuous development, her form

was slender, lithe and graceful, as so many mountain-girls' forms are, and her features were of almost Grecian fineness and regularity. The color of her hair was that pale, sheeny gold, so seldom seen in the South, the true harvest yellow, very thick and long, plaited into two heavy braids and bound with scraps of blue ribbon. Her eyes were gray-green, specked with amber, full of expression, clear, deep, and innocent as a babe's. There was that in her complexion, beyond its extreme fairness, which is best called bloom, the warm flush of incomparable purity and health. She turned her head slightly to one side, keeping time with a slender, high-arched foot as she played. The contrast of color and expression between her and the other two whom we have described was much stronger than mere words can make it appear. It was, in fact, the contrast between the new and the old, in all the phases of the two.

The big, outside, far-away world of wealth and fashion and business turmoil had no immediate relationship to her life. Its doings had reached her only in the vaguest and most indefinite way, as rumors from another sphere, or as the murmur of a battle heard from a great distance. Unlike her father and her sister Adelaide, she had no war memories, no recollections of former wealth and splendor, to keep her looking back to a better day. Three years old when the war ended, scarcely six when brought here to the mill, she had no distinct notion of life beyond the limits of this little valley. She

had entered her eighteenth year knowing as little of social life as if she were still a child in the nursery. Of nature, however, she had learned much, and her father and mother had carefully taught her the usual routine lessons of the schools. For the rest, she took to the banjo as naturally as does a mocking-bird to singing, mastering its difficulties with scarcely an effort. She had found this fine old instrument hidden away in a pile of rubbish in the attic of the mill, where its owner had left it at some distant time. No doubt it had been hidden there that it might escape the fate of everything valuable which came in the way of Sherman's army. As for its real owner, he may have fallen in defence of the lost cause. At all events, he had never returned to claim it.

In the South the banjo, during the days of slavery, was looked upon as a rude and savage instrument, fit only for the hands and the taste of negroes. It bore the brand of everything connected with the pathetic life of the slave. The wonder is that long ago this fascinating lyre of the cabin was not lifted to its proper place, which is beside the violin. No doubt the secret of its neglect lay in the fact that it was treated as a negro instrument, and regarded as one of the symbols of slave-life.

Rosalie Chenier had beautiful hands, white, slender, perfectly formed, and the act of playing upon the banjo disclosed all their suppleness and grace. She was not conscious of her beauty, however, and was as sincere and outright in her actions as were the birds.

There was something in her attitudes and movements that would have been *bizarre* had the element of utter simplicity been wanting. As it was, however, she would have impressed any observer as being a pure and sweet child of Nature, in whom the germ of brilliant power lay waiting to be warmed into activity.

What a prize she would be for some gifted artist whom chance might lead over the blue mountains into this hidden valley of the South! She sat there, outlined against the gray stones and mossy timbers, a perfect bit of nature, fresh, picturesque, charming. No man could have looked at her without some tender emotion getting astir in his breast. She was dressed in inexpensive white muslin, upon which the floury dust of the mill would not show, and around her waist was a band of pale blue ribbon.

The pure notes of the banjo made themselves distinctly heard above the rumbling of the buhr-stones, the creaking of gudgeons and the bubbling of the flume-stream.

Colonel Chenier had closed his book, and was gazing at Rosalie with an air of dreamy interest, as one indulging in pathetic fancies.

Suddenly the musician ceased her playing and said, —

“Oh, yonder comes Frank Ellis down the trail.”

“How do you know it is, Rose?” inquired her father, looking over the valley to where the red trail zigzagged its way along the steep slope.

"Because it is a white horse; and then no one else would ride so fast down that trail. It is Frank, I am sure."

"Oh, quite likely," said Colonel Chenier, refilling his pipe. "Where is he going so often up the valley of late?"

"He has cattle in the range up there, or something, hasn't he?" suggested Miss Adelaide.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Rosalie, making a whorl of her pretty hand, and looking through it at the far-away horseman.

"I hope if it's Frank he'll have something new to tell us," said Adelaide.

"He'll bring some papers and magazines, I dare say," added Rosalie. "I am real hungry to read a new story." She got up as she spoke, and went to a fragment of a stone wall, upon which she climbed so as to get a better view of the distant trail. Perched up there she sang a snatch from a simple song, playing a low accompaniment the while.

"There is a moonshine establishment up the gulch, west somewhere," said Colonel Chenier, in a low voice to Adelaide. She started a little, and after a moment's reflection, —

"Has Frank Ellis anything to do with it?" she asked.

"He *may* have. I don't know. It's been rumored about, and there are some detectives lurking around in the neighborhood," said the Colonel, his voice full of doubt and caution.

"He is of a good family," said Adelaide thoughtfully, smoothing her work, "and I shouldn't think he'd care to engage in such business. It isn't honorable, is it?"

"Most of the boys consider it none of those Northern officers' business what is done down here in the mountains," replied the Colonel.

"But it's against the law, isn't it?"

"Yes, against *their* law; but *our* boys don't mind the Yankee law to any alarming extent."

"It would be better to let distilling alone, any way, I think, don't you?" exclaimed Adelaide, in a tone of such earnestness that her father could no longer evade the point.

"Oh, the business is not the best," he said, "but these revenue meddlers might find better employment themselves than going about to destroy the property of free men."

"But a man of Frank Ellis' standing and family, — I should think he'd scorn so vulgar a business."

"There's a smack of daring and danger in it; and then, too, there is a great deal of money to be made," said Colonel Chenier, puffing rapidly at his pipe. "The Yankees ought to be willing for us to have at least *one* way of getting back what we've lost."

The sound of a horse's feet was now heard, and in a moment a cavalier of the true mountain type came up at a gallop and drew rein in front of the mill.

He lifted his broad-brimmed felt hat and bowed to his horse's mane. He was a tall, round-limbed, compactly built young fellow, dark haired, with olive complexion and keen black eyes, regular features and a superbly poised head. A suit of well-fitting gray clothes, with heavy top-boots, brass spurs and buckskin gauntlets, to which were added a leather waist-belt and three heavy pistols, gave strong emphasis to his rather brigandish bearing. At his right side swung a light Maynard rifle.

"Good-morning, Miss Chenier; good-morning, Colonel," he said; then, as if for the first time noting the younger girl's presence, he bowed low again, and with a peculiarly pleasant smile added,—

"Miss Rosalie, good-morning."

"Lovely morning, isn't it?" said the Colonel, the ring of Southern cordiality in his heavy voice.

"Lovely, lovely," was the answer, in a rich, sweet tone. "I have had a charming ride over the mountain. The air is exceedingly fine, and I have never seen vegetation so rich and rank. Why, the leaves on the hickory sprouts are as large as the skirts of my saddle."

"Those leaves will be immense when they are quite grown, Mr. Ellis," said Rosalie, striking a chord upon the old banjo.

The young man bowed and laughed lightly.

"I fear you are trying to spoil the effect of my comparison," he said, ending with a peculiar compression of the lips, which caused his heavy mustache to droop below his well-turned chin.

"But your saddle-skirts are so enormously large," Rosalie added. He looked down, and seemed for the first time aware that he was riding one of those skirtless "trees," thousands of which had been left scattered through the hill-country by Sherman's troopers. He laughed outright.

"I had forgotten that I changed saddles this morning," he exclaimed; "it wasn't a very happy comparison, after all; but the hickory leaves are just as large, all the same."

Mrs. Chenier, inside the mill, shut down the flood-gate, and with a few weak mutterings the machinery stopped, leaving a damp, trickling sound, which was almost silence, in place of the rumbling. The mocking-bird up in the mulberry-tree took swift advantage of the lull to pour forth his wildest and most difficult melody of song.

"I have a letter for you, sir," said the cavalier, searching in a side pocket as he spoke. He let the envelope fall in getting it out. Lightly swinging himself downward, he recovered it without dismounting. Although the horse was tall, the feat was performed with as much apparent ease as if he had stooped from a standing posture. He recovered his seat in the saddle with a romantic clang of spurs and pistols. The noble horse arched its neck, and struck the ground impatiently with its left fore-foot, scattering around a shower of sand and gravel.

The young man tossed the letter to Colonel Chenier, lifted his hat again, and with another low bow

loosea the bridle-rein, and sped away up the valley at a slow gallop. Just round the first turn of the road, they heard him begin to sing, in a strong mellow voice, a familiar old ballad. He left behind him, lingering in the air, a suggestion of mediæval days.

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CHAPTER II.

A LETTER FROM AUNT MARGUERITE.

WHAT is called the hill-country of North Georgia consists of a network of mountain-chains running in every direction, with fertile valleys between. Formerly it was the home of the Cherokee tribe of Indians, and, for that reason, is sometimes designated as Cherokee Georgia. Some great travellers, among them Bayard Taylor, have compared this region to the most picturesque parts of Italy as regards both climate and scenery. In many places the landscape is broken into the grandest alpine masses. Notably this is so in the more mountainous parts lying west of the Western and Atlantic Railroad.

The little "pocket," in which for the present we linger with the slender beginnings of our history, lies in the very thickest of the hilly network, many hundred feet above the sea-level, protected from great storms, — a dreamy little eden of quietude and peace. The people of the region are, for the most part, simple, ignorant mountaineers, fifty years behind the age, independent, hardy, reticent, peculiar in dress and manner, but brave, honest,

and true to their traditions; in many respects not unlike the peasantry of the south of France. The men are great hunters, and you may see them stalking through the woods with the long flint-lock rifles of a century past flung across their bony shoulders. They take to nothing new. With them progress is an unknown word. A few families, here and there, are cultured folk whom adversity or the pursuit of health has thrown into these primitive valleys. The lives of these cultured exiles is dry, lonely and eventless. The Chenier family is a good example. From month's end to month's end their existence is merely negative; that is, they are not dead. The old mill is not more humdrum in its rumbling and creaking than is the daily round through which they turn. The elder members have the sad satisfaction of remembering some days of glory, and they often talk over that happy time. Rosalie hears them; but it is like reading a romance. It charms her without rendering her discontented. She is imaginative, and often nurses that roseate dream, indefinite though it be, of one day roaming away, beyond the circling mountains, into the great outside, the strong, joyous, rushing world.

If a letter is fascinating of itself, independent of anything it may contain, to us who live in the full tide of modern progress, what must it be to one in the deep seclusion of a place like the "pocket"? It is, until the seal is broken, a mysterious messenger from an unknown country.

1851

Rosalie came down from her perch upon the broken wall, and approached her father as he began to tear open the envelope which had been thrown to him by the young horseman. It was as if she expected great tidings, a message of charming import from some benign and powerful personage far away somewhere, anywhere, in that romantic world beyond the mountains. The stir in her blood was of that obscurely tender sort which barely tinges contentment with longing or hope or indefinite desire.

"It is from Marguerite," said Colonel Chenier, as he slowly unfolded the heavy white unruled sheet covered over with small cramped writing.

"Aunt Marguerite?" quickly inquired Adelaide, her face taking on a look of immediate interest.

Colonel Chenier's hand trembled as he adjusted his spectacles. A sort of ashen gravity momentarily deepened in his cheeks.

"Read it aloud, papa," cried Rosalie; "but wait, I'll call mamma," she added; and without a second's pause she ran into the mill and soon returned, leading a pale, thin, fair-faced woman, whose air was that of an energetic invalid.

"It is a letter from Aunt Marguerite," exclaimed Adelaide, as her mother sat down beside her. Rosalie remained standing, still holding the banjo in her left hand, her sweet lips slightly parted, her eyes beaming with all a child's sincere curiosity.

"She is coming to see us," said Colonel Chenier, lifting his eyes from the letter and looking into his



wife's pale face, as if asking what she thought of the startling announcement.

"Oh, oh!" cried Rosalie, "coming here! Is she really coming here?"

"Coming here!" echoed Adelaide.

A little color rose into the transparent cheeks of Mrs. Chenier, but she remained silent.

"What *can* we ever do with her, papa?" said Adelaide, almost petulantly.

"Oh, I'm so very glad," exclaimed Rosalie, her face emphasizing the statement with a quick flush.

"Read it aloud to us."

Colonel Chenier looked over his glasses at the radiant girl, and then, turning back to the letter, began reading as follows:—

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, 2 May.

My dear brother, — I have at last determined to write to you again. Of course I cannot imagine why you have not answered any of my letters. Certainly I filled each one of them with sisterly affection. Lately I have been nursing a fear that, since I sent a small remittance in the first one, five years ago, it may have been stolen, and the same thief may have purloined the valueless ones with the hope of obtaining further booty. Be this true or no, I write to you now to say that I am coming to look for you, and to see for myself how you are getting along. General Forbes, your old commander, was here with us for a day or two, three years ago, and he told us that he had heard that you were quite ruined, financially, by the armies, but he could not tell us what you were doing. I have tried, in every way, to find out something about you, all in vain. Of course I cannot rest content. You are my own dear, only brother, and I must not, I cannot, let you get

entirely away from me, never to see you or hear from you any more. I hope this will reach you all right. I shall follow it in the course of a week or two. So you may expect me. Mr. Roosevelt will come with me. He will be the better for the mountain air, poor man. Lately his railroad schemes have caused him a world of vexation. Some English and Dutch capitalists have combined to try to thwart his Florida plans; but at last he has formed an alliance with some Chicago and New York men, and the worst seems over. His health is hurt, however, and I have made him promise to come with me into your delightful mountain region.

As I write, I grow childishly impatient to see you and Sue and Adelaide. What is your younger daughter's name? You know I have never seen her. If she is at all like Adelaide, I shall love her dearly. I hope Sue's health is good. I used to fear it would entirely fail.

You need not answer this letter, as we shall go at once to Augusta, where Mr. Roosevelt has some affairs to arrange, thence to Atlanta for a few days, and then to you. Mr. Roosevelt will go to Catoosa Springs, but I shall remain with you for some weeks. I anticipate a happy time, and hope some good may come of my visit.

As ever, your affectionate sister,

MARGUERITE CHENIER ROOSEVELT.

Colonel Chenier lifted his head as he finished reading, and for a space he turned the letter idly in his fingers, gazing at the distant mountain-tops as if trying to see beyond them into the "low country" where, in the heart of lovely old Savannah, his only sister lived, rich, childless, exclusive — an aristocrat of the most ultra Southern type. He was looking in his memory at the grand mansion, the shady streets, the fanciful clumps of old palmetto trees,

the spacious halls and parlors, the heavy old-time furniture, the lace, the damask, the tapestry, the curious *bric-à-brac* treasures, the paintings, the statuettes.

Mrs. Chenier and Adelaide looked at each other mutely, despairingly, as women do when suddenly overtaken by some extreme exigency. Then with a common thought they turned inquiringly toward the old mill as if to say to it, "What can be done with Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt?"

"Where can we put her to sleep?" exclaimed Adelaide.

Mrs. Chenier made an impatient gesture as her only response.

"A small remittance!" said the Colonel, glancing back over a part of the letter. There was just the slightest ring of disdain in his voice.

"For several years we never so much as inquired at the post-office, or dreamed of a letter," he presently added in a softer tone, "and the mail service has been quite as demoralized in the South as politics and finances. Everything has been subjected to the rules of a systematized scheme of robbery originated and operated by the infernal carpet-baggers." He always grew angry when he spoke of carpet-baggers. He never yet had seen one, but he hated them all the same, and he usually accounted for such evils as threatened or befell him by referring them to carpet-bag influences.

"Well, we must begin to prepare at once," said Mrs. Chenier, lacing the fingers of both her hands

together, and glancing from her husband to Adelaide; "we shall have no time to lose."

"But, mamma, what *can* we do? How *can* we prepare?" cried Adelaide, emphatically.

"Oh, Marguerite is a plain, sensible woman, after all," said Colonel Chenier, trying to speak lightly, "and I don't doubt that we shall get along all right."

"But, Wilton," interposed Mrs. Chenier, "you know we have no room, and not even a spare bed for her."

"I'll give Aunt Marguerite my room and bed," said Rosalie, quickly. The women looked at each other.

"Bless my little girl," cried the father, pulling Rosalie down upon his knee, and kissing her cheek. She seemed a mere child to him.

The Chenier family thus grouped made a striking picture, set in the midst of gray stones and slender tree boles, and relieved against the dripping troughs of the old waterwheel. The mocking-bird overhead kept up a sort of faltering improvisation, broken here and there, as if by some careless slip. The breeze was of that perfumed and dream-burdened kind never felt north of the Tennessee valley — a breath of the land of balsamic gums, of spicy woods, of perfect flowers and luscious fruits, — a land where the days are long reveries and the nights are languid dreams. This group might have served the painter's turn as well for either a happy or a pathetic picture. Colonel Chenier, for the

moment, had forgotten all his troubles in a sudden realization of Rosalie's beauty and sweetness. His wooden leg had vanished. He had not lost his fortune. The old mill was a castle in Spain.

Mrs. Chenier and Adelaide began at once to plan certain re-arrangements of the household furniture, and to talk over possible additions to the pitifully scant supply of necessary comforts.

Those who have once been rich are the only persons who can feel poverty to the fullest degree. To be born poor is sometimes a blessing. To be made poor is always a calamity. And there is nothing connected with the latter so affecting as the petty turns of economy practised by women; the hardships of men are nothing as compared with what a woman suffers in striving to hide from other women the fact that her ribbons are faded, and her dresses old.

Rosalie was entirely free from the embarrassments of the situation. She had never known a better state, and her surroundings had never distressed her. The birds of those fragrant mountain groves were not more free and happy than she in the ignorance and innocence of her healthy and fervid youth. The simple food, the pure water, the mountain air and the variegated scenery had made her growth perfect. She had come up as a flower. She had developed, as do the wild things of the forests, to the symmetry of Nature's model.

While the family was thus grouped and intently busied with the matter in hand, a tall, angular

youth came shambling up the road, bearing to the mill a heavy bag of corn.

"Mornin'," he exclaimed, in a sharp, cheery voice, as he neared them. "You 'uns seems purty comf'table this mornin'."

"Good-morning, Grafty," responded Colonel Chenier.

Rosalie went into the mill to make it ready for grinding the corn.

Grafty Jones (how such a name as Grafty ever originated cannot be explained) followed her, stooping a good deal under the weight of his load. Inside the mill he set the bag down, untied the string at its mouth, then lifted it and poured the bright golden grain into the hopper, smoothly grooved by the friction of long usage.

Rosalie took out the toll in a little cedar measure, pouring it into the mill's treasure-box. Then she pressed the lever which raised the flood-gate, and immediately the music of the flume and the creaking of the gudgeons began. The old building trembled throughout its frame, from roof to foundation.

Grafty Jones drew the sleeve of his blueish homespun shirt across his perspiring face, at the same time seating himself upon an upturned empty barrel. He watched Rosalie flit here and there, now peeping out at the little window to note how the water played over the big wheel, now touching the regulator to steady the rattling feeder of the hopper, and anon thrusting her beautiful bright hand into the stream of meal to test its quality. The breeze

came into the mill and shook his long sandy hair. He was aware of some sweet influence, and he sat there perfectly happy, his mouth partly open and his thin whitish beard trembling on his lank jaws. His small pale blue eyes became dreamy and dull.

When the grinding was done, and the mill had been stopped, Rosalie held open the bag while Grafty Jones, with a small wooden scoop, shovelled the meal into it.

"Squir'ls is plentier 'n I ever see 'm afore," said he, as if imparting a great secret.

"Are they," said Rosalie, indifferently.

"An' I wus to the seventh court-ground las' Sat'day."

Rosalie did not respond, but she was looking at him with her smiling eyes.

"Yes, I wer' tha', an' Brint Martin he wer' tha', an' he 'low he cud whirp me."

Rosalie had turned her head to look out through the open window.

"We kum together purty quick, an' it wer' not no fight at all."

The meal was now all in, and Rosalie stooped to tie up the mouth of the bag. As she did so Grafty Jones murmured in her ear, —

"I whirped 'im." Then he drew back and looked at her as if to note the effect of his graphic story.

"I knocked 'im fur'n across this yer flo'," he added, seeing that she did not seem greatly impressed. "An' he never got up tell they holp 'im

up, nuther. Wouldn't be s'prised ef he'd cripple around a while afore he runs agin' me any more."

"There," said Rosalie, drawing herself lightly up and touching the bag with her dainty foot, "it's ready for you now."

As Grafty Jones took up his load and went away, the young girl followed as far as the door. Her mother and sister were still earnestly discussing the dreaded visit of Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt. Colonel Chenier had resumed his pipe and novel.

CHAPTER III.

AT THE FOUNTAIN.

THE old mill in the "pocket" had been built in the days when the Cherokees were in possession of North Georgia. In its architecture it resembled those tall, peaked barns of the Middle States, built when each farmer was his own carpenter and joiner. It was residence and mill, both in one, the dwelling-rooms being arranged behind the large apartment of the mill proper. It had two "run of stones," as millers have it, one for grinding wheat, the other for grinding corn, the latter being much the oftener in use, owing to the fact that the people of the "pocket" ate corn-bread almost exclusively. The mill-stream was a slender brook, tumbling down a wild gorge from its fountain a few hundred yards away. Angler never found a better stocked stream. Every spring it was filled with schools of bream, or, more properly, blue perch; fish as game as trout or bass, and quite as fine for the table. Its banks were literally fringed with flowers, among which the iris, the balsam and the wild geranium were conspicuous.

Rosalie had worn a slender path from the mill

up to the stream's source, a lonely spot, darkly shaded, where the water rose with a mellow gush from a deep fissure in a rock. Some smooth-barked maples grew in a clump on one side of the spring, on the other side two luxuriant liquid-amber trees rustled their tenderly rich foliage. Here was the favorite haunt of the hermit thrush, and that sly little woodpecker which so dearly likes sweet saps and balsamic gums. At high noon, when the Southern sun poured its heat almost vertically down, many wild things came to rest in this cool place, or to bathe in the pure cold fountain. The squirrels chattered around, the wild turkeys peered from the dense thickets of sassafras, and, occasionally, when all was very still, a dappled fawn would come for a drink, flitting away like a shadow if but a bird fluttered too suddenly.

A vast escarpment of rock, dripping with moisture and tapestried with green moss and variegated lichens, towered above the tree-tops, like the wall of some ruined fortress of Titan days. In the niches and crannies of this huge cliff the fly-catchers had their nests and the green lizards their hiding-places.

Rosalie had become familiar with all these wild things, more as a matter of accident than as the result of effort. She would bring her books up here to study, and would rest so still in the deep shade that even the most timid creature in the wood did not suspect her. Here she read "Paul and Virginia," the "Thoughts" of Pascal, "Mysteries

of Udolpho," "Children of the Abbey," and "Scottish Chiefs." Here, too, she studied French, the language of her ancestors, spoken in all its purity by her father. Of recent literature she knew nothing. The books at the mill were of the sort which filled American libraries fifty or sixty years ago, with the addition of some volumes of French classics. This cool twilight place by the fountain became Rosalie's study during the long Georgian summers, and she seemed to take into her physique, and into her mental nature as well, the freshness of the atmosphere and the riant health of the vegetation. Her seat was a gray, lichen-blotched stone overlooking the fountain, and giving, through the one rift in the dense foliage all around, a glimpse of blue sky and a bluer mountain peak on the western horizon. Neither her mother nor her sister ever came up here, and as for Colonel Chenier, his lameness prevented any attempt to do such a thing. To clamber over the boulders and logs that lay in the way taxed even the agility of Rosalie.

In the course of the week following the arrival of Aunt Marguerite's letter, there was so much to do at the mill that Rosalie had little time for outdoor rambles or study. This letter had produced a great effect. It was like a waft from Magic-land. The changes that it wrought about and within the mill were wonderful. Everything was, by one means or another, brightened and put into order, with especial reference to the accommodating of Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt, whose name daily

grew more fascinating to the fancy of Rosalie. In picturing this great visitor, the young girl's mind outlined a stately dame, such as those in the romances she had read, dressed in silks and lace and stiff brocades, carrying herself grandly and haughtily, with a pale patrician face and cold gray eyes. This fancy weighed upon her; it came into her dreams at night; it followed her through her routine of daily work. At last it was with a sense of infinite relief that she found herself free to go up to her bower at the fountain. She took with her a volume of Châteaubriand; but she found reading irksome and tasteless. Her mind rebelled. The cooing of a turtle dove in one of the sweet-gum trees fell upon her sense of hearing as if from a vast distance. The bubbling of the spring, as it cast its limpid stream over the smooth stones, had in it an indefinable plaintiveness very acceptable to her mood. She was not in the least unhappy. Quite the reverse. But she felt the stirring of new and strange fancies. She breathed for the first time the air of the great outside world, a gust of which had come over the mountains with her aunt's letter. During the last two or three days she had heard much said about the stately Roosevelt mansion and its costly furniture, its curious articles of *vertu*, and all the semi-tropical strangeness and luxuriance of the trees and plants in which it was embowered. She had never seen a city, nor a mansion, nor costly furniture. She never before had especially cared to see any of these things. But now the leaven of ambition was

beginning, no matter how subtly and obscurely, to work itself into the tissue of her nature.

She sat there, gazing at her open book, but not reading, deep in the mystery of her new fancies, when suddenly Frank Ellis stood before her. She started and uttered a sharp note of alarm.

"How you scared me, sir!" she exclaimed.

"Hush!" he said, "speak low; there is danger."

She grew quite pale, and glanced furtively around.

"What is it?" she murmured, her lips quivering, and her eyes growing strangely liquid and brilliant.

"A government dog on my track," he hissed; "and I am running from him to avoid killing him."

"A dog?" she inquired.

"Yes, a sleuth-hound, a man-hunter, a government detective."

"Oh, a Yankee?"

"Yes, a miserable revenue-sneak."

"But what—why does he follow you?" she demanded.

"Speak lower," he said, sitting down upon a stone near her and laying his rifle across his knees. He looked flushed and excited.

His lips shut themselves together with a quiet, writhing motion, and there was a dangerous light in his eyes. He reached back a hand and loosed the heavy pistols in his belt, as if to have them ready at a second's notice. "I have led him a long chase, and a futile one," he added; "much good may it do him!"

Rosalie did not understand all this. She had a

vague impression that it meant something connected with that terrible war of which she had heard so much and in which her father had been so horribly maimed.

"I don't want to kill him ; but if I can't get rid of him — "

"Oh, Mr. Ellis, don't kill any one!" she half whispered, spreading out one of her slender white hands towards him deprecatingly.

He looked intently at her, and as he did so a curious change crept over his bold, swarthy, handsome face. It was as if a surprising revelation had suddenly flashed into his mind — a revelation which thrilled through him like some rare and charming strain of music. His pulse seemed to quicken, and the silence grew intense before he again spoke.

"I have given him the slip, I think," he said, at last, "and if he will let me and my property alone, I shall not hurt him. But I can't bear much more. I won't be dogged in this way by a villanous Yankee emissary. He is trying to find my location in order to fetch troops to destroy my business."

Rosalie did not understand. She did not know Ellis' business. As for him, she had known him as an occasional visitor of her father's for several years. She had always heard him spoken of as Frank Ellis, and as a young man of excellent family and character ; but still there seemed to be a reserve of secrecy about his goings and comings, and an air of watchfulness and restlessness ever present with him, which had not failed to impress her with some

shadowy notion of the life he was leading. Now as she looked at him sitting there, alert, half-expectant, resolute, a feeling of mingled admiration and awe crept over her. No doubt there is to a young, innocent girl something unmistakably fascinating in a dark, strong semi-outlaw armed to the teeth, and ready for dangerous adventure. The love of romance is one of the fundamental elements of woman's nature.

Frank Ellis was quick in seeing the influence he was just then exerting, and his shadowy impressions of Rosalie Chenier's beauty and purity drew themselves together, all at once, blending into the first state of love.

"I must go back," said Rosalie, rising, and adjusting, with trembling fingers, her straw hat. She glanced down the little path and hesitated.

"I will go with you till the mill comes in sight," said Ellis, getting up and resting his gun in the hollow of his left arm. His manner was grace itself, and yet there was in it that peculiar reserve and courtliness which in *ante-bellum* days distinguished the Southern man from the Northern one at all our great social centres.

"I believe I am a little afraid to go alone," she said, with a sweet, faltering smile; "you startled me so. I never was so scared."

He immediately stepped ahead of her and led the way down the zigzag path, turning now and then to offer her assistance when stones or logs came in the way.

She could not help noting how tall and lithe and well-proportioned he was, and with what a self-confident air he bore himself. No doubt the heavy pistols in his belt and the ivory-hilted bowie-knife, and the gun, added much to the effect of his appearance. The war had left a few such men as he scattered through the mountains. They became chiefs, so to speak — leaders of the mountaineers in all their enterprises, lawful or otherwise.

When the mill was in sight Ellis stepped to one side to let Rosalie pass. As she was going he said :

“ Miss Chenier, I may not see you again soon, possibly never.” His voice was tender and rich with suppressed emotion. “ If these Yankees destroy my business over here I shall have to go away.”

Her clear deep eyes met his with childlike frankness, but there was a hot flush in her cheeks. She did not know why her heart jumped so. She felt a great pity for him. It would be too bad, she thought, if he should be compelled to go off to some very distant place.

“ I hope it will not come to the worst, sir,” she said ; “ you must keep in good spirits. Papa says no one can be successful if he cannot be cheerful.”

Ellis smiled, and held out his hand. “ May I be cheerful for your sake ? ” he demanded in a tone of voice never heard in the North, a tone of gentle persuasiveness mingled with infinite deference, which, nevertheless, had in it an artificiality not wholly pleasing.

"Yes," she replied, quite promptly, taking his hand. "Won't you go down to the mill?"

He held her hand, and gazed inquiringly at her. She was entirely at her ease, and met his look so frankly that he actually laughed. "No, I cannot go any farther," he said; "good-by. Don't ever forget me, Miss Chenier."

He stooped and kissed her hand, then turned and walked away, soon losing himself in the tangles of the wood.

Rosalie went down to the mill with a strange feeling, as of some indefinite loss or some sweet imponderable gain pervading her consciousness. She went about all the rest of the day humming a simple tune, half aware that she was hovering on the threshold of a great and beautiful mystery.

CHAPTER IV.

AUNT MARGUERITE.

“ La-bas, la-bas, ma belle petite,
Qu'ils étaient beaux, les jours,
Les jours, l-e-s j-o-u-r-s ! ”

ROSALIE loved a little French song taught her by her father when she was a child, a mere jingling ditty with a simple air, such as often takes hold of one's memory and haunts it for days. Its short, crisp words and tripping rhythm suited well the banjo accompaniment which she had arranged for it.

She was sitting on the old bench under the mulberry-tree singing this song when the carriage which brought Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt to the mill came in sight, a little way down the “pocket” road.

“ Ma belle petite,
Qu'ils étaient beaux, les jours — ”

She trilled with her rich, but rather slender and childlike, soprano voice, the chords of the banjo blending well with it. The mill-gate was down,

but the water had not yet filled the raceway, and only a trickling sound came from the mossy fore-bay. Colonel Chenier, as it chanced, was not in his accustomed seat under the mulberry-tree, and Mrs. Chenier and Adelaide were in the mill.

When the carriage, a rather seedy cab from the neighboring railroad village, stopped, Rosalie caught her breath excitedly, quitting short in the midst of her song.

A little sharp-faced, black-eyed old lady got briskly out through the door of the vehicle, and looked about her inquiringly. The cabman deposited a heavy trunk and two large travelling-bags on the ground near by. Rosalie stood gazing as one scarcely able to credit her vision. Could this wrinkled, sallow, thin little old person be her aunt, Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt?

Colonel Chenier came hobbling up, and set the matter at rest.

"Dear sister," he cried, gathering the newcomer into his strong arms, and kissing her withered cheek again and again.

Rosalie was disenchanted. This was not the cold stately dame of whom she had been dreaming.

Mrs. Chenier and Adelaide came forth from the mill, and the guest was given a warm welcome.

When Rosalie was presented, the old lady ran her sharp black eyes over the girl's lissome form, from head to foot.

"You are very pretty, my dear," she said, in a soft quavering tone, taking both of Rosalie's hands

between her own. "You are the prettiest Chenier I ever saw."

Rosalie smiled radiantly. She was too unsophisticated to doubt her aunt's sincerity.

"So she is," exclaimed Colonel Chenier; "my little girl is a real beauty."

"Little *girl*," said Aunt Marguerite, emphasizing the second word; "little *girl*, indeed! She's a young lady. She ought to wear her dresses longer. Come, my dear," taking Rosalie's arm, "show me to my room, please,—I am very tired."

Aunt Marguerite was immediately taken up into the cosey but scantily furnished room prepared for her. The cabman followed with her baggage. She sank into a chair by the window, whence she could have a fine view of the valley, the foothills and the deeply notched chains of blue mountains, lying one beyond another in almost parallel lines. She leaned back, and tipped her vinaigrette against her nose, half-closing her eyes as she slowly inhaled the sharp contents.

"You don't look at all like your father or your mother, my dear," she said to Rosalie. "I wonder where you got those eyes."

"Papa calls them '*feu de la Vendée*,'" responded Rosalie; "and sometimes when I get a little excited he cries out, '*Flammes du Midi*!' or '*Eclair de la Provence*!'"

"But your hair is not Southern hair. It is fine Northern gold." The old lady, as she spoke, reached forth a thin hand, and toyed with the girl's

long pale braids. Her manner, her voice, and the touch of her fingers, had in them that caressing tenderness peculiar to the South. "You must be a strange sheep in the Chenier flock," she continued.

"But not a *black* sheep," Rosalie quickly responded, laughing lightly.

Aunt Marguerite smiled. Her kindly old heart warmed to the sweet girl. They at once became far more than friends. The childless woman had found just what she had, all her later years, been looking for. She felt as if she must take Rosalie in her arms, and cover her face with kisses. What a sunbeam to take to the Roosevelt mansion, she thought. What a ripple she would make in Savannah social circles, this lovely mountain niece!

Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt had for many years nursed a desire to find some beautiful girl to adopt as her own. Why would not this gold-haired Chenier, this clear-eyed, pink-lipped, sweet-voiced maid of the mill, serve her turn? Although this thought arose in her mind at once, Aunt Marguerite, being wise, did not let fall even a hint of it for several days. She studied Rosalie with great care, and found some new grace, some fresh element of loveliness, or some rare phase of innocence, developing in her nature every day. No doubt the old woman's peculiar situation tended to intensify her appreciation of the young girl's beauty and purity; and then the rough, unusual *entourage* in which this charming character was set, served to accentuate all

its blooming freshness, all its luxuriance and vitality.

Pedantry, albeit of a harmless sort, is always present, a constituent element of Southern intellectual life.

The chief reason of this may be found in the fact that Southerners read the books of the old pedantic school of authors. Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt was pedantic to the extent that all her thoughts were measured by the old-school rod, and it pleased her greatly to find that Rosalie was, as might have been looked for, indeed, of the same faith and order. One thing, however, grated harshly upon Aunt Marguerite's sense of the fitness of things: the banjo. It was unclassic. It belonged to the negro. She never before had heard of a young lady who played the banjo, or, if she had, the questionable environments of the stage were connected with the thought. But the tone of this instrument was so pure, and there was something so insinuating in its short, runic notes, that Aunt Marguerite hesitated, and finally was captivated. No doubt the influence of Rosalie's personal loveliness had the greatest part to do with this conquest.

"It has something just a grain wicked in it, I fear," Aunt Marguerite would say, speaking of the banjo. "Something, I cannot tell what, of *la sauvagerie du pays*, as if it refused to immediately connect itself with our gentility — our culture."

To this fine old lady of the "low country," life

at the mill presented a thousand savage aspects. Its limitations seemed so strange and narrow, its influences so subtle and irresistible, its social setting so crude and valueless. She found Rosalie a constant source of surprise and admiration. How had this girl grown to such physical perfection and to such moral symmetry with these surroundings and hindrances? How had she attained to this grace and ease of movement, this ready and earnest manner, this curious blending of wisdom and innocence?

Aunt Marguerite watched, day after day, the dull round of spiritless events at the mill: the comings and goings of the queer, awkward mountaineers, men and women, whose scant clothing and dull faces indexed a barren and compressed existence; the lifting of heavy bags of grain and meal or flour by Rosalie; the details of operating the simple old machinery; the dash and flash of the water over the giant wheel; the clash of cogs and the creak of gudgeons — all these ran monotonously together, — and to what end? But despite the dull, dry and cramped situation, Aunt Marguerite discovered that a new strength and elasticity were coming into her physique, and that her mind was taking on a most unusual clearness and serenity. Was it in the water she was drinking, the food, the air, the variegated landscape views, the matchless blue sky? Was it in the bird-songs that called her from sleep in the cool sweet mornings? Was it in that dreamy hum of water that lulled her to sleep

at night? No matter what influence worked the change, she felt something akin to second youth stealing into her life. Ah, the childless woman had found a sweet, sincere and innocent nature upon which to exhaust her love!

CHAPTER V.

AUNT MARGUERITE PREVAILS.

ABOUT two weeks after the arrival of Aunt Marguerite at the mill, a thing came to pass which caused her to begin fearing lest the seed of trouble had already been sown in Rosalie's life. It was a visit from that magnetic young cavalier Frank Ellis, who, thinking he had thoroughly outwitted the government detectives, had once more begun his riding into and out of the valley on his mysterious business. He brought some papers and magazines for the members of the mill household, among them a recent number of the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*" for Colonel Chenier, who, from natural bent, distaste for everything American since the downfall of the South, and from long habit, turned toward France for all his reading. A gay fashion periodical pleased Rosalie with its colored plates representing stylish women and children at a Northern summer resort. With all a young girl's curiosity touching them, she yet seemed not to think of these lovely and costly dresses, bonnets and things in connection with herself.

She mastered with quick glances the minutest

details of their construction and arrangement, admired the exquisite blending of colors, the graceful lines of waist and skirt, the jaunty elegance of this hat, or the quiet charm of that bonnet. Her taste was not at fault. She chose the simpler things. But she chose them in the abstract, and with no personal view, not with any immediate sense of their appropriateness to a purpose or need of her own. Ellis sat on a bench beside her and helped her turn the leaves of the periodical, now and then offering some light comment on the plates.

Aunt Marguerite noted with the practised eye of one old in the ways of society that this young man was no boorish mountaineer. He was a keen, thoroughly sophisticated, self-poised man of the world — a narrow world, maybe, but the world all the same. She did not like his restless eyes, his startled glances as of a hunted man; and she recoiled from his big pistols, his gun and his bowie-knife. He looked to her like a bad man, who could nearly hide his badness under a veneering of suave politeness. His voice had false notes. And yet she could see how easily he might have been a good, and perhaps even a great man. His large head, his strong dark face, his air of imperiousness, his firmly rounded jaws, were the exponents of a high order of ability.

“How well such a dress as that would become you!” he said to Rosalie, pointing out a blue silk robe ruffled and flounced in the then prevailing

style; "your complexion and your pale bright hair would blend so sweetly with that color."

This seemed to Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt a piece of cool, devilish wickedness. She saw Rosalie glance down at her own coarse white dress, dusty with flour, a shadow of self-consciousness flitting across her pure face. Ellis bent closer to her ear, and added in a very sweet soft tone, —

"Blue and gold; your hair would fall over that rich silk like fleeces of sunset cloud over a blue sky. How I should like to see you in that sort of attire! You are very beautiful, Miss Rosalie — Miss Chenier," his voice dropping almost to a whisper.

But Aunt Marguerite overheard every word. She could not help it.

A rich blush leaped into Rosalie's cheeks, and then a pallor followed, which affected Aunt Marguerite deeply.

Ah, this serpent in Eden! The good woman felt as if she would like to bruise his head with her heel.

"Come, Rosalie dear," she said, "I want you to go with me to my room, please. You know you haven't read to me any to-day."

The young girl rose promptly, with a quick responsive smile, as her aunt's voice called her wholly back to herself.

"O madam," exclaimed Ellis, deprecatingly, "I have but a few moments to stay, can't you let Miss Chenier show me the rest of these pictures? I'm a genuine child about looking at pictures of any sort."

Aunt Marguerite affected not to hear him.

"Come on, dear," she added; and Rosalie obeyed.

"Good-by," he said, holding out his hand, which the girl took.

"Good-by," she responded.

As their eyes met he said, "I too should like to hear you read. Won't you read some for me one of these days?"

"Oh, yes, sir, if you would care to listen," she replied.

"Come on, child," persisted Aunt Marguerite.

The cavalier darted a quick, intense look into the old lady's eyes, then, lifting his hat and bowing very low, turned, mounted his horse, and rode away up the valley.

Aunt Marguerite was wise. She did not venture a word to Rosalie about this young man just then, much as she felt like saying what she suspected. It was too often the case, she reflected, that a young girl would develop a sudden and mysterious perverseness when too directly approached in a matter of this sort. She preferred to bide her time, and compass her duty in the surest way. She began gradually.

"Is this young Mr. Ellis a very nice young man?" she demanded of Rosalie, some time after he had gone. The question was put in the most careless way, and in a tone indicative of no special desire for an answer.

"Oh, yes, very nice, indeed," responded Ro-

salie, looking straight into Aunt Marguerite's little eyes. "He's the best young man I know. He's so brave, too. He will fight any one."

Mrs. Roosevelt attacked her smelling-bottle in a way so vigorous that it made Rosalie laugh. The old lady was beginning to think that these up-country folk must set a high value on fighting. She had heard much said on this subject within the last few days.

"What good is there in fighting?" said she; "the war is over. It would be much better if young men would think of nobler things."

"Oh, they don't fight much," responded Rosalie, "except when Yankee detectives come in here to interfere with their business. Mr. Ellis told me he should not want to hurt any one, 'if he could have his rights without.'"

"What is his business, dear?" asked Aunt Marguerite.

"Why, I don't know," replied Rosalie; "I could ask papa. It's some sort of dangerous business, though. The Yankees are trying to break him up; I know that, for he told me."

"Where does he go when he rides past here up the valley? There's no town up that way, is there?"

"His business is up there somewhere. I don't think there's any town."

"He's an ugly fellow."

"Ugly?"

"Yes, I don't like his eyes, they are so restless and soulless. I think he's bad, Rosalie."

The young girl gave her aunt a quick searching glance, then her face grew quite pale. Mrs. Roosevelt pretended not to notice this, but she was studying Rosalie's face, and trying hard to divine her thoughts. No doubt selfishness had much to do with Aunt Marguerite's deep interest in this matter. She had once for all set her heart upon taking Rosalie to Savannah. Already the minutest details of her plans were perfected, though she had never more than hinted them to the household at the mill. Lately she had been telling Rosalie a great deal about her mansion and its surroundings, its books, its furniture, its garden and its tropical plants and trees. She had described the fine shell roads, her carriage and horses, the beautiful suburban places, Bonaventure, Thunderbolt, Tybee, and the many grand old homes in the country. Then, too, she had spoken freely of the young gentlemen and young ladies who often came to her house; of how the gentlemen talked, and of what the girls wore; of how these gay young people made the house ring with their mirth; how the grand piano would fill the spacious rooms with music. Rosalie would listen with lips apart, and eyes darkened with intense interest.

When Aunt Marguerite began to suspect that her niece might be growing too tender toward the mysterious young cavalier, she at once conceived the plan of hurrying her away out of reach of this threatened calamity. She had frequently asked her how she would like to go live in the Roosevelt man-

sion, and mingle with the happy young folk of that grand, shady old city, and Rosalie had said she would be delighted; but there was Colonel Chenier: would he let his child go? The question had to be answered. Why not now? As for Rosalie, if her heart had not been too deeply touched, she would be easily managed.

And so Aunt Marguerite at last fell to work in earnest, laying siege to the Chenier household, and attacking from every side at once. She was irresistible. She carried the place by storm, and had her way.

Mrs. Chenier consented when Aunt Marguerite whispered in her ear the doubt she entertained respecting Frank Ellis' intentions. Colonel Chenier finally gave in to the educational argument. Rosalie ought to have liberal advantages. It was a shame for her to be wasting her precious beauty and youth and rare mental gifts here in this dreary, dreamy little valley. As for Adelaide, she soon came over to Aunt Marguerite's assistance, and the fight was won.

Then the preparations began, and were not allowed to flag until a carriage stood in front of the old mill to take away its light and life.

CHAPTER VI.

REALIZATION.

IN the mean time Rosalie had passed through a bit of experience not uncommon to young girls, but which affected her peculiarly. She was called to the house of a mountaineer hard by the mill, to minister to a sick child, a sort of thing she often had to do. There seemed to be a soothing influence in her presence, a magnetic power in the touch of her hand, that these poor neighbors eagerly sought whenever sickness or other trouble fell in their household. She never refused them, but took her freshness and cheerfulness to them with a promptness and sincerity which never failed of its full recognition. They all loved her. Rosalie was a name spoken tenderly by even the roughest "moon-shiner" in the "pocket."

The house to which she now went was what may be called the regulation North Georgia double log-cabin, a sort of building to be seen all the way from Chattanooga to Atlanta. The walls were of pine logs split into halves, the flat sides turned in, with thin boards nailed over the spaces between. The floors were of smooth plank, very white, and

sprinkled with clean sand. Two airy rooms having an open pass-way between, with a detached kitchen, constituted the entire arrangement. The chimneys were very large, but built of split pine sticks plastered with red clay. Such a building, when embowered in luxuriant trees and vines, is not devoid of a certain picturesqueness entirely wanting in the pallid board cots of the Western States. It suggests poverty of a dry, narrow, hopeless kind, but it also reserves an element of individuality and independence, as if here dwelt a hardy lover of old-time liberty. In fact, after all, one must go into the South and look amongst the ruins of the Confederacy for the truest remnants of old colonial simplicity.

A big stone served as doorstep, and as Rosalie set her foot on this she met Grafty Jones coming out. He had a long rifle in his hand, and from his shoulder hung an otter-skin bullet pouch and a curiously carved powderhorn. The rifle had a flint lock, and its curly maple stock extended to the end of the barrel, where it was tipped with brass. Its breech was heeled with a crescent-shaped piece, also of polished brass. Its guard and ramrod thimbles shone like gold.

"Why, howdy, Miss Rosie," said Grafty, his crisp voice lowered almost to a whisper. "Fine mornin', haint it? Thought I'd see ef I could git a squir'l to make some soup for this here sick child here."

"How is the baby, Grafty?" she inquired, stopping a moment on the stone beside him.

"Hit's not danger's, I don't think, though hit's purty bad, too. Ef hit didn't have them chokin' spells hit mought git well right away. But them spells is bad—mighty bad." Grafty's face was drawn into a thousand dry wrinkles in the attempt to express commiseration. He stretched his long skinny neck towards Rosalie, his pale kindly eyes feasting on her beauty. She smiled upon him in her gracious, innocent way, and went into the house.

Grafty's heart was not so dry as his skin. The passionate blood of the South was in him. He strode away brimful of love for Rosalie, and an hour later, having watched her road, he joined her in her walk back to the mill. He had been in the woods industriously working himself up to the point of proposing marriage to her, and now he felt well prepared for the task. His long gun was slung across his shoulder, his left forearm resting across the small of the stock. In his right hand he carried a red cotton handkerchief, with which he occasionally mopped his forehead and neck. It was quite a warm day, though a fresh breeze was stirring the wood.

"I've been a-doin' some tall thinkin' here lately, Miss Rosie," he said, looking sidewise at her.

"Have you? What about?" she demanded rather mechanically. In fact, her thoughts were busy with the great coming event, her going away with Aunt Marguerite.

"I'm a'most afeared to tell ye, Rosie, cos I don't

know what you mought think of it." He spoke as one warily approaching some delightful secret.

She turned her eyes upon him now with a look of immediate interest.

"Oh, go on, Grafty, it must be something good," she said; "what is it?"

"Well, I kinder think hit air purty good," he dryly responded. "If a feller loves a girl hit's wo'th tellin', haint hit?"

"O Grafty! Do you love a girl?" she exclaimed, entering heartily into the romance he was suggesting.

"Don't I, though!" he responded, ending off with a chirruping chuckle. "I'd kinder think I did. Kin ye guess who, Rosie?"

"No, unless it's Sally Akin."

"Sally Akin! She don't speak to me. She's mad with me."

"Who is it, then?"

"There's purtier girls than Sally Akin right close about," he said, some vague allusion in his intonation, his eyes fixed upon the ground.

"But who is it?" persisted Rosalie, pushing back her hat to let the breeze blow upon her blooming face.

"Don't you know, Rosie?" he drawled, glancing quizzically at her.

"No, I can't imagine, I'm sure; do tell me."

"I'm a-lookin' at her right now," he exclaimed, shrugging his bony shoulders, whilst his face softened and brightened.

Rosalie stopped short in the middle of the narrow red road, her eyes wide open with astonishment.

"You're just too mean, Grafty," she said; "I don't like for you to talk to me in that way. It isn't nice at all. If I should tell papa —"

"But, Rosie, I do love you, upon my word and honor I do! It's not bad for me to tell it to ye, is it?"

"Hush! I won't hear another word," she cried. "Why, just to think!" She looked at him from head to foot as if putting marks of emphasis after each peculiarity of his long, angular frame and thin dry visage. "Just to think!" she repeated; "I don't care for you ever to speak to me again, sir." Her face had whitened. She felt a keen humiliation, unsophisticated as she was.

"Don't be mad, Rosie," he faltered, beginning to tremble. "I can't bear for ye to think I'm mean. Mebbe, p'rhaps I hadn't orter told ye. S'pose I ortn't anyhow, but — but — but I jest couldn't a-holp ef I'd a-died for it next minute!"

Something in the pathetic hopelessness of his voice softened Rosalie's feelings in a moment, but it did not draw her back to that simple freedom with him from which he had just driven her forever. She was now fully aware of a vast gulf between them. He stood before her in all the barrenness of his withered and compressed nature. Heretofore she had not thought of his ugliness and vulgarity. She had always been his friend.

"I am not angry," she said in a voice rather stern for her, "but I am in earnest. You ought to know better than to talk such nonsense to me."

"Miss Rosalie — I — I —" he broke down. She saw big tears roll off his gaunt cheeks. He was trembling from head to foot, and there was an ashy pallor on his lips and temples.

If a painter could have fixed that scene on canvas, it would have been called an allegory. The critics would have said, here is the story of beauty and ugliness, — the two poles of life.

Grafty Jones' attitude was short of comical by that mean measure of space which sincerity afforded him. He stood sniffing and sighing as some babyish boy might have done at the breaking of a plaything.

Rosalie turned and resumed her way toward the mill. He stayed in his place until long after she had passed out of sight.

This incident, crude and uninteresting as it was, unlocked a new door for Rosalie. It set her to thinking in a channel hitherto scarcely approached by her boldest imaginings. It also revealed to her the terrible loneliness and barrenness of this life she had been living. She looked across the little hill-rimmed valley, with its comfortless cabins and slanting fields, its slumbrous quietude and its shimmering colors; and she wondered what would come to her when she followed Aunt Marguerite away over the blue mountains and down into the

far low-country, and the great shady city of which she had heard so much. An immediate and sharp understanding of some of the limitations and influences of this life at the mill came to her as if from the lips of Grafty Jones himself. It was as if he had said to her, "You are no more than I. We live on the same plane. We are bounded by the same lines." The humiliation was so sudden that it shocked her. She thought of his low origin, of his ignorance, his ungainliness, his queer mountain dialect, his shabby dress; then she looked at her own flour-dusted, home-made attire, and a hot flush came into her face. Her amber-gray eyes flashed. She was of the proud old Chenier stock, as she now realized for the first time. Her faltering willingness to go away with Aunt Marguerite became a firm resolve from this moment. She even became impatient for the day of departure to come round.

Aunt Marguerite had sent Rosalie's measure to a dressmaker in Atlanta with orders for a considerable outfit of feminine apparel. When the huge package came Aunt Marguerite said, "Just some simple things, — mere necessities, dear. When we get home you shall have the rest. This gray suit is for travelling in; this simple muslin will do for in-door wear, and this short blue silk may serve a good turn in an emergency."

There were kid boots and delicate gloves, simple collars, with blue ribbons, lace, a plain, pretty hat, — everything.

Rosalie was transformed when she came forth arrayed in that elegant travelling-suit. It was as if she had taken on a strange new beauty with which to break the hearts of the household as she deserted them, perhaps forever.

CHAPTER VII.

OUT OF THE VALLEY.

ROSALIE looked back as the gay new carriage from the railroad town rolled away from the old mill. Bright tears were in her eyes and a worried look in her face. The parting had been a hard one. Her mother had gone into the mill to cry alone, Colonel Chenier and Adelaide stood near the broken stone wall striving to look cheerful. There was the mossy big wheel, dripping and cool. The mulberry-tree was dusky with its mature June foliage. A genuine Southern drowsiness was in the air. On the line of mountains in the west some slanting cloud-lines rested, half concealed in a fine gray-blue haze. As the mill receded with the going of the carriage, Rosalie felt as if the world itself were quietly withdrawing. She felt also a dizziness, as if she were soaring away into distance. Her father and sister seemed to waver and fade out from her vision. The little valley drew its lines together, shrivelled and dry.

Aunt Marguerite had settled herself comfortably in the seat beside Rosalie, her black-gloved slender hands crossed in her lap.

The driver, a broad-shouldered colored youth, sat on the high front seat, swaying heavily to the motion of the vehicle.

The road followed the windings of the mill-stream, bright willows on one hand, on the other open fields and brushy woods alternating. Men were plowing in the patches of Indian corn, and the fragrance of freshly turned soil came from the furrows. The wheat had just been cut, standing now in golden shocks, securely capped with inverted sheafs. Flocks of small sheep and herds of scrubby-looking cows browsed in the dry pastures, where sassafras and persimmon bushes had crowded out even the woodsedge. The poor, empty-looking log houses set among their peach orchards and thickets of plum trees, seemed to glare in a mute, surprised way at Rosalie as she passed. She was in a sort of bewilderment, half dreading, half curious to meet the great change; and yet she was ready to sob and moan, seeing this little world slipping away from her. At times she felt impelled to leap out of the carriage and run swiftly back to the mill.

After a few crooked miles along the stream their road suddenly turned boldly into the foothills, and soon began zigzagging its way up the mountain toward which they had been going.

At a stony bluff where a spring gushed out, the driver stopped to water his horses in an old mossy bucket, or rather a one-handled piggin. All around, the wood was dense and silent. It was a

lonely spot where one might imagine robbers lying in wait. But the gray lizards were the only lurking things discovered. A crested vireo now and then sent its shrill note through the silence.

"I shall be glad when we are once in the car and well started," said Aunt Marguerite, looking doubtfully about, and sighing as one who is bored.

Rosalie did not respond. She watched the horses drink, with long hissing sips, the pure cold water, her eyes full of quivering tears.

A sharp clacking on the stony road above them announced the coming of one who soon appeared around the first short turn. It was young Ellis on his superb gray steed. He rode directly to the carriage, where he drew rein, and lifting his broad hat, bowed to his saddle pommel.

"Good-morning," he said, then glanced inquiringly from Aunt Marguerite to Rosalie and back again, an unpleasant look of suspicion beginning to cloud his face. "You look like travellers. I hope you don't mean to desert the mill, Miss Chenier?"

"I am going home with Aunt Marguerite," she replied, her voice shaking a little.

Ellis compressed his lips and stroked his horse's mane. There was a knot of wrinkles between his eyebrows.

"You don't mean to stay long, I hope?" he rejoined, fixing his eyes searchingly upon her and measuring her graceful figure, so perfectly shown by the gray travelling dress.

The driver had remounted to his seat, but sat respectfully waiting for the conversation to end.

"I don't know how long I may stay," she half sobbed; "aunt wants me to stay always."

"Always!" he echoed.

"She is to be my daughter from this time on," said Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt, coldly and decidedly, as if to end the matter at once; "drive on," she added to the colored boy.

Ellis lifted his hat again, but there was a terrible look in his eyes as they scowled at the old lady.

The carriage proceeded.

"Good-by—remember me," he said to Rosalie. His voice reached her ear softly, sweetly, and his words caught in her memory and lingered like some bit of a sweet, sad tune.

"Good-by—remember me," she quavered back to him, and then a great humming filled her ears, and her heart seemed to stand still.

It was but a spur of the mountain, over which the road led, and the driver drew up his horses on the highest point to let them rest a few moments before beginning the descent. It was a bald, cheerless spot of itself, but the view was superb. The valley lay below them clearly lighted by the sun, its every field and wood and house sharply defined. Even the old mill was easily distinguished. The flocks and herds, the plowmen, the yellow stubble and huddled sheafs and all the accompanying aids of fences and thickets and groves, made a bucolic scene peculiarly primitive in its general picturesque effect. But beyond the valley, the mountains, like great blue billows, swept away, chain after chain,

to the horizon, where the perfect June sky came down into a wavering purple mist of distance.

Rosalie gazed wistfully. Aunt Marguerite toyed with her vinaigrette and glanced furtively at Rosalie and out over the grand landscape. A swift pang assailed her conscience. It was a heavy responsibility she was assuming. Surely this was a sylvan region along these mountain slopes, a rural snuggerly this tranquil valley, whence had come the effluence upon which such longevity as that of Grandsir Haines was sustained, — Grandsir Haines, that oldest man our country has held, who lived the last third of his one hundred and thirty-six years cuddled away in one of those healthful little valleys.

Aunt Marguerite silently asked herself whether, after all, this dry, slow equable life of the mountains was not nearer the ideal than that feverish turmoil of the cities. She looked at Rosalie and wondered whether this exquisite bloom, this ravishing freshness, this *verve* and subtile innocence, would all evaporate in the new atmosphere to which she was taking her. How would the air of the salt marshes and the rice-fields affect this mountain flower?

When they drove into the village where Mr. Roosevelt was to meet them with his private car, it was far on toward noon. The streets were almost deserted, and the new white buildings, erected amid the *débris* of the old town Sherman had destroyed, glared fiercely in the sunlight.

Mr. Roosevelt's car had just arrived, and Mr. Roosevelt himself promptly came to greet them, — a tall, gray man with the hawk-like face of a Jew, and the bearing of an old-time Southern gentleman. He took Rosalie's hand and held it caressingly as he offered some warm, informal salutatory phrases, his voice winningly cordial in its gravity and depth. He hurried them into the car, one of those sumptuous structures which our railroad magnates affect, where he held a quiet interview aside with Mrs. Roosevelt.

"To Chicago!" exclaimed Aunt Marguerite in response to his first sentence.

"Yes," he added, "yes, to meet a representative of the Dutch bondholders and my coadjutors in Chicago. It will be a pleasant trip for you and Miss Chenier."

Aunt Marguerite lifted her vinaigrette and reflected. Here was a swift turn in her affairs.

"How long shall you be there?" she presently inquired.

"I cannot say; possibly a month, or even two months," replied Mr. Roosevelt; "but in any event it will be pleasant. You have never seen the great West. Chicago is a wonderful city, and the way from here to there lies through a charming country — the great prairies and all that."

"Oh, there's no argument," replied Aunt Marguerite, half ruefully: "if you must go we must go too, and there's the end of it."

It thrilled Rosalie when the train began to move.

It was her first experience in railroad travel. Through the window she saw the houses of the little town slipping away to the rear. A current of cool air came in and momentarily strengthened.

Mr. Roosevelt sat down by her, and gradually drew her into conversation as they went clattering along between the sweet dusky summer hills

An exhilaration took possession of her. All traces of her recent tears disappeared. Her cheeks glowed and her eyes took on their wonted depth and clearness with an added intensity which was not lost on this strong, healthy old man.

"That's a charming girl, Marguerite," he said to his wife, when the opportunity offered; "it does one good to be near her. She's like some rare blossom or, or, — or something. See what a profile, and what hair, and then that half-wild grace and that incomprehensible air of innocence!"

"How you rave!" exclaimed Aunt Marguerite; but she was greatly pleased that her husband should like Rosalie.

The young girl was a few feet away, still utterly absorbed in watching the changing landscape as it fled past.

The two colored servants who had charge of the car were passing to and fro in the quiet performance of their duties. One of them, a kindly faced grizzled old man, fetched some ice-water and offered it to Rosalie, at the same time half-timidly venturing to say, —

"Don't put out yo' head too fur, Miss, kase dis

car's wider'n common, an' de bridge tim'ers might hit ye."

Rosalie did not fully comprehend, but she felt the security and comfort of being attentively cared for.

At Chattanooga, Mr. Roosevelt's private secretary and *fac totum*, a short, bald-headed, middle-aged man, joined them, bringing with him an air of facts and figures, documents and business suggestions. His motions were energetic and his voice rather harsh.

"He is a Yankee," Mr. Roosevelt said, "but he's indispensable. His head is as perfunctorily right in matters of business as is a Swiss watch in the matter of time."

His name was Hosea Jenkins. He always wore a frock coat of blue cloth and a narrow white cravat.

CHAPTER VIII.

GLIMPSES OF THE WORLD.

AT Nashville, Tennessee, Mr. Roosevelt had business which detained him for three days. Aunt Marguerite seized upon the opportunity, and added quite largely to Rosalie's wardrobe. Meantime there were charming drives about the city, a visit to the chaste and beautiful marble capitol on the terraced hill, a stroll across the suspension bridge to get a view of the Cumberland River in its deep-cut bed, and, what to Rosalie was most charming of all, the rounds of the showy shops and bazaars. Handsomely equipped carriages filled with gayly dressed women and children rolled in the beautiful streets as the coolness of the afternoon fell over the city. Rosalie was delighted with the sweet fat faces of the babes laughing out from their gauzy French caps, and her heart warmed towards the stately matrons who accompanied them and their colored nurses.

The journey from Nashville to Louisville was taken in the night. When Rosalie awoke they were crossing the Ohio River on the railway bridge. Some small steamboats were anchored on the east

side of the island with their bows up stream. The low green hills of Indiana shone in the morning sunlight.

All day they sped along, that little party of Southerners, in their luxurious car, the country growing smoother, the fields darker, until at last that lovely prairie between the Tippecanoe and the Kankakee spread out around them with its immense tracts of corn and grass waving in the steady breeze. The pretty, clean towns, with their maple-shaded streets and cosy houses, the stoutish red-faced men and buxom women, who stood on the station platforms to take passage, or to greet friends who would get off, interested Aunt Marguerite as much as they fascinated Rosalie. These liberal landscapes, these harsh, hearty voices, this immense freedom of manner, this stir and bustle, gave an idea of inexhaustible resources, a flow of energy, and an intense sincerity and earnestness of purpose not found in the South. The air that came flowing in through the windows of the car was something swift, crisp and real. There was not a dream or any suggestion of dallying in it. As a plant that leaps to the full stature of stem and leaf in the first hot days of spring, Rosalie's sleeping consciousness of power and destiny took form as she swiftly caught and assimilated the spirit of what she saw and heard and felt. Not that she so quickly became sophisticated or comprehended the forces and tendencies of things; but a great desire to know and

to act, to mingle with the crowd, to talk with people, to inquire, to suggest, to accumulate experiences, filled her and intoxicated her. It was not ambition, nor any dawning or incipient stage of it, nor any sudden self-consciousness. It was the discovery of freedom which a bird, caged from its birth, feels when cast forth to try its wings in the open air. She saw well-dressed young ladies and young gentlemen walking together to and from the stations and along the streets of the towns. Once a gay party of them rushed rollicking into the Roosevelt car, and had begun taking possession of the richly cushioned seats, when the conductor came in and politely, but peremptorily, expelled them. Rosalie was sorry to see them go; she wanted to hear their talk and study their manners. She had never before seen people so alert and quick, so gushing with life, so self-confident, and so good-natured withal. The girls were plump, some of them almost stout, rosy-cheeked, clear-eyed, sweet-lipped, a far more intelligent and interesting class than those of the South moving in the same walks of life. The young men were strong, muscular fellows, whose cheerful faces and stylish clothing indicated that they were the sons of thrifty, independent, ambitious parents.

Rosalie felt the influence of this fresh and vigorous life as compared with the effete, nerveless inertia of the South. This broad, free way of drawing the lines of action suggested a more liberal habit of thought than she had been used to.

She could not tire of looking out over the flat expanse of the prairie, where vast herds of cattle were grazing, scattered from near at hand to the far undulated line of the horizon. Here and there quite pretentious cottages were half-hidden in tall Lombardy poplars and flanked by big barns and skeleton windmills. In places, beautiful hedges of *bois d'arc* ran parallel with the railroad and perpendicular to it, cutting the green expanse into spacious squares. She saw men in these fields riding upon their plows and driving spans of strong, sleek horses. It hardly seemed labor thus to be drawn back and forth between the lines of dark green corn, with nothing to do but to guide those leisurely going and docile animals. It was so much better than the Southern mode of agriculture.

Mr. Roosevelt spent much of the time pointing out things of interest to Rosalie, and explaining to her the agricultural, social and educational methods of the Western people. Everything was so different from what she had been used to, and fashioned after so grand a scale, that the expense seemed fabulous; but she fastened in her memory everything he told her, and went on asking questions with all the eagerness and sincerity of a child.

It was after nightfall when they reached Chicago. Mr. Roosevelt had telegraphed in advance for rooms at one of the great hotels, whither they were driven through the broad streets, amid bewildering lights, and in a hoarse conflict of sounds. The air from the lake had a decided chill

in it. It was as if they had suddenly reached the true North. Overhead, the thin, high clouds seemed to scud across great black-blue abysses of sky into which no starlight could penetrate. Rosalie had grown used to sudden changes, and this last only served to impress her with the vast distance which now lay between her and the drowsy little mountain valley, where, in the dear old mill, father, mother and sister were at this moment talking of her. She could hardly wait till she got into a room with Aunt Marguerite to cover her face and cry. She was not allowed much time to indulge her homesickness, however, for Cary was to sing at one of the theatres that night, a treat not to be missed, Aunt Marguerite said, and she must go. But Mr. Roosevelt tried in vain to procure seats. All were taken. So, at last, they were forced to wait till the evening following. The circumstance served to call Rosalie from her fit of depression, and she went to bed and slept sweetly.

Next morning she and Mr. Roosevelt took breakfast together in the great crowded dining-room, but they had a small table quite to themselves. Rosalie found it very amusing to watch all those people from behind the morning newspaper that Mr. Roosevelt had given her. Only a few women could be seen, and most of them were ready with hats and wraps to continue their journeys, being mere transient stoppers. The men were, as a rule, well-dressed, well-fed looking persons, apparently in a great hurry, and each on good terms with his

neighbor. They all ate rapidly, some of them dividing their attention between their beefsteak and their newspapers, taking a mouthful and a paragraph alternately.

Rosalie quickly noticed that Mr. Roosevelt was the object of much attention from many persons in the room, and in glancing through the newspaper, she found the following : —

“Mr. Auguste Roosevelt, the great Southern railroad king, is in the city, stopping at the Grand Pacific. He has with him his wife and daughter.”

She smiled delightedly, thinking how this would please Aunt Marguerite, who had not come down, but had ordered her coffee served in her room. She did not for a moment suspect that she herself was an object of much more attraction, for the masculine eyes in that room, than Mr. Roosevelt, though it was plain enough to every one else that she was. Her freshness and beauty of face, her unconsciousness of self, the lithe grace of her figure, which Colonel Chenier used to say was *svelte* despite its plumpness, her rare gray eyes and pale-gold hair, the perfect poise of her rather large head, all were emphasized in their effect by the combination of gray and blue in her elegant morning dress, and by the indescribable air of something which was not timidity nor yet bashfulness, but a sort of bird-like shyness, as if on the slightest provocation she might fly away.

A rumor of her beauty spread at once with that mysterious rapidity which we all have wondered at.

That evening at the opera all the glasses were levelled upon the Roosevelt box, and many lips murmured praise of the "beautiful young heiress from Georgia."

Rosalie was so absorbed in following the story on the stage, and in listening to the ravishing contralto voice of Cary, that she was wholly unconscious of all else around her. She had never before been in a theatre. All this color and light and music, this passion, the row above row of elegantly dressed people, the scenic splendors, the atmosphere, the perspective, gave her that exhilaration which one might feel who is suddenly transported into a paradise.

It was hard for curious observers to determine whether this innocence of expression and this complete unconsciousness of manner were real or assumed. It was beautiful and fascinating, however, this fresh, strangely babyish face, with the dainty color ebbing and flowing in it.

In the intervals between the acts, Rosalie swept the vast audience with her wide-open, half-inquiring eyes, as if looking for some familiar face. A mountain violet—the violet that grows to such marvellous size and beauty in Cherokee-Georgia—could not have appeared more simply and sweetly *naïve* and artless.

At length, in the distance, she saw some one who looked like Frank Ellis, and for a time all the garish show of the theatre disappeared. She was in the dark grove by the wayside spring. The

wind was soughing in the pine-tops, and the crows were croaking as they flew across the valley. She saw the jagged worm fences inclosing the patches of wheat and corn; she even imagined a waft of the pungent fragrance of sassafras and liquid-amber. The young, daring cavalier of the "pocket" sat on his charger, his dark eyes looking almost fiercely into hers, his swarthy face showing an underglow of passion. She saw his broad sombrero, his belt and pistols, his heavy boots and cruel spurs. A thrill ran over her, half a pain and half a delight. A blush, like the color of a pink peach-bloom, gathered in her cheeks and lips.

"Good-by — remember me," she heard him tenderly say, as he bent low in his saddle. His voice, as she imagined it, was sweeter than Cary's. She breathed a breath of the mountain air; the tender pastoral influence of the little valley crept over her. Suddenly the banjo! The thought was like a chord of runic sounds, loyal to the pure simplicity of the old mill life.

"*Ah la mandore, la mandore!*" she murmured in the tongue her father so loved.

"Did you speak, dear?" said Aunt Marguerite, laying her hand lightly on her arm.

Rosalie came back to herself so promptly and thoroughly that her wandering was not detected.

"It was a mere meaningless exclamation," she replied. "There's so much to see here. It confuses me; and the singing has charmed me too, — it is grand."

"What a healthy, vigorous set of people these Western folk seem to be!" said Mr. Roosevelt. "You can scarcely see a fragile form or a pinched face in all this company."

"The women are stout and rosy, nearly all of them, and the men are so heavy-limbed and broad-shouldered," added Aunt Marguerite. "It gives an idea of *avoir du poise* to look the audience over. It is substance singing to matter this evening, I should say."

"It doesn't much resemble a Southern audience," said Mr. Roosevelt; "more gravity and less dignity."

"But these are happy, sincere-looking faces," replied Aunt Marguerite, "and the ladies dress in charming taste."

"So it seems to me," said Rosalie; and she quickly added, "everything is really delightful. I think I should like to live here, only" — with a quick little sigh — "the 'pocket' and the dear old mill would be all the time calling me back to them."

"In a little while your homesickness will leave you," said Mr. Roosevelt, "and then you will enjoy everything to the full."

But when a strong, sympathetic voice, in response to a recall, sang the "*Old Folks at Home*," Rosalie felt some hot tears running down her cheeks, and in her heart the longing for her mother's kiss and her father's tender good-night overcame every other desire.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. EDGAR JULIAN.

AS the days of their stay in Chicago slipped by, Aunt Marguerite and Rosalie grew more interested in studying the phases of life exhibited in that wonderful metropolis of the West. Nothing could be less like what either of them had been accustomed to. Mrs. Roosevelt had travelled extensively in Europe, before the war, but she was quite ignorant of the peculiarities of social, political and business life in the rich and powerful Northern States of her own country. Long ago she had been at Saratoga and Newport; but at these places she had associated almost exclusively with Southern people, who were there, as she was, spending the summer months. But, even if she had known the Northern and Middle States people before the war, the change had been so great that now the knowledge would be of no value. In the old slavery days, Mr. Roosevelt had been a wealthy cotton-broker in Savannah. Since the war he had directed his attention to railroad matters, and by some bold and successful turns had possessed himself of the controlling interest in a great combination of roads

and projected roads in Southern Georgia and Florida. His possessions were known as the "Roosevelt System of Southern Railways," and his conquests had rendered his name quite familiar in Northern financial circles ; but he had rarely come North, and his visits had been mere matters of urgent business. His wife had not come with him. She had been content to rule a small select circle of the most exclusive aristocrats of Savannah in all matters social. Even now she was in Chicago through the merest turn of accident

As for Rosalie, so long as she could forget the old mill and its household and environment, everything she saw or heard or read charmed her. She drank this new, practical aggressive stream of knowledge with a thirsty eagerness. Even the details of Mr. Roosevelt's railroad schemes, as she heard them discussed between him and a certain short, stout, ruddy man known as Mr. Largely, interested her deeply. This Mr. Largely who was somewhat past fifty, had a big, squarish head and stubby, grizzled beard. He dressed well, talked fluently but ungrammatically, and was worth ten million dollars. He knew nothing but railway facts and formulas, bonds, stocks, receiverships, floating debts, earnings, franchises, landed donations and voted aids, first mortgages, consolidations, pools, and all the rest. He seemed to be quite fascinated with certain comprehensive propositions Mr. Roosevelt had submitted. These propositions seemed promising, they certainly appeared quite safe ; but Mr.

Largely, Rosalie noticed, always ended by saying, "When Edgar Julian comes I'll submit it to him. I always consult him. Never saw a man of his age who had such a clear head. He's always right. I expect him back from New York at any moment now. Had a letter from him this morning, stating that he had about closed things up there. We'll wait till he comes."

Mr. Roosevelt, who very much desired an early consummation of his schemes, did not especially relish this waiting for the coming of Edgar Julian, railroad attorney, whose dallying in New York was prolonging his absence from the South; but there was no way except to wait. Mr. Largely would agree to nothing else.

"I can't trust myself," he would say, "in a matter of such intricate legal complications, without having Julian's opinion. This railroad litigation has so many dangers. It may be necessary to send him to Europe before the question we are investigating can be altogether settled. He'll know when he comes."

Every conference had this kind of ending. All the points would be carefully discussed; the bearing of each detail noted, and the inevitable conclusion reached that the plan was feasible; but Edgar Julian must decide the matter before any of Mr. Largely's money could be counted on or his influence secured.

"This Mr. Edgar Julian must be a wonderful man," Mr. Roosevelt said one day to Mrs. Roose-

velt and Rosalie, after Mr. Largely had gone away. "I shall be glad when he condescends to return from New York." His voice had a touch of vexation in it. As for himself, he had never been in the habit of waiting for another man to decide upon what he proposed. "I suppose that if he should chance to take it into his legal head to doubt the strength of any link in my chain of plans, my negotiations here would have to cease, and those foreign capitalists would at once scoop up those lines of road." He added this half aside, and more as if thinking aloud, than with any intention of making himself heard.

"And who is Edgar Julian?" inquired Rosalie.

"He is a young lawyer who has turned his attention specially to railroad litigation, and has been so successful that he is looked upon as a phenomenon here in Chicago," replied Mr. Roosevelt. "No doubt," he continued, half-apologetically, "he is a shrewd fellow, or, as they say here, a long-headed fellow, with a genius for enormous fees."

"Getting money," said Rosalie, her pretty head turned reflectively to one side, "seems to be the whole of life to the people up here."

"You forget how eagerly they spend it, dear," said Aunt Marguerite. "Their extravagance is fully equal to their love of gain."

"Oh, I like it, I like it," exclaimed Rosalie. "There is something powerfully fascinating in all this rush and clash. I feel as if I had just emerged from the chrysalis state. My eyes see the world for the first time."

"You are going to be an enormous butterfly soon," said Mr. Roosevelt, laughing quietly, as he ran his eyes over the girl's graceful form, now attired in pure white, with striking dashes of blue here and there. Her pale yellow hair had been freed from braids and done into a knot, very low behind, and a fleece of shining curls almost hid her forehead. Her complexion had caught a new brilliancy, and her eyes seemed deeper and wiser, though the half-surprised, questioning look of utter innocence still remained.

"But I shall be a very tame sort of butterfly amid all these gay ones here," she said with a radiant smile. "It would be truer to call me a bee. I am going to work, search for the honey of knowledge. I am so — so crude and faulty, so incomplete."

Mrs. Roosevelt looked sharply at her niece, as if surprised at something in her tone, but said nothing.

About this time a servant brought some letters. One was for Rosalie from her father, written in French, as was his habit. It acknowledged the receipt of two from her, and told of health and humdrum existence at the mill. It was full of affectionate sentiment couched in the tenderest terms, but it contained nothing more. Rosalie read and re-read it, vainly striving to extract from it something not in the words. Her father desired her to be content, not to get homesick, and to embrace every opportunity for obtaining culture; but he did not say he longed to see her, nor did he hint that he

hoped she would soon come back to the "pocket." He had carefully guarded every phrase so as not to irritate her with any suggestion of the void her absence had made in their hearts there at the old mill. But Rosalie had a good cry over it. Its very pedantry and contempt of everything new was dear to her. It called up her sweet, patient mother's pale face, and it presented her dark, sorrowful sister Adelaide as well as the maimed form of her father. It set the dull, despairing South before her.

Her tears were not yet dry when Mrs. Largely, wife of the millionaire railroad man, called to take her and Aunt Marguerite driving in her elegant carriage. She was a well-preserved woman, much younger than her husband, and quite a brilliant talker. She had seen much of the world, was perfectly simple and unaffected, and was, in fact, a most charming person in every way. It was Mr. Largely himself who had suggested and arranged for this drive.

"My wife will be glad to meet you, I know she will," he had said, after Mr. Roosevelt had introduced him to Mrs. Roosevelt and Rosalie, and he had talked with them for an hour in his peculiar, off-hand, hearty way; "and I shall have her fetch round the carriage and take you out driving. You must see Chicago. Mrs. Largely will be delighted."

There was a homeliness and sincerity in all this which struck Marguerite Chenier Roosevelt as

something altogether Western. It was not the way that a Southern man would have chosen to introduce his wife to strangers ; but it seemed not a bad way at all, — the very best way, in fact.

Mrs. Largely was more of a society person than her husband, but quite as simple as he in her manners. She had read a good deal, had travelled some, and was full of pleasant reminiscences and allusions. Neither she nor her husband had inherited any wealth. They had commenced life poor, and their fortune was the result of wise management and safe speculations during and since the war. They now lived in a rather small, but beautiful gray stone mansion on one of the most fashionable streets in the city, which they rarely left winter or summer.

It was a delightful drive ; the hour passed like a moment to Rosalie. Mrs. Largely's talk was just of the kind the girl's mind hungered for, full of bright pictures of society and spiced with fashion gossip ; running off now and then to dip into the last new novel or magazine sensation ; dropping wise little sayings here and there ; in fact, filling every moment with something or other which afforded Rosalie the very clearest and truest glimpses of a life which always fascinates the young girl who has been reared in seclusion. Mrs. Largely was making no effort. Her manner was as spontaneous as could be. She imagined that Rosalie was a fashionable Southern belle, thoroughly familiar with all the subjects included in her skipping, airy

talk. Mrs. Roosevelt was aware of this, but she wisely forbore to dispel the illusion, and as for Rosalie, she did not think for a moment of placing herself in any other position than that of a charmed listener.

When their drive was ended Mr. Largely met them at the ladies' entrance of the hotel. He was holding the arm of a tall, heavy-limbed, square-shouldered young man, who lifted his hat and bowed to Mrs. Largely, at the same time flashing upon Rosalie his gray-blue eyes from under their heavy brows.

"That's Edgar Julian, the famous young railroad lawyer," whispered Mrs. Largely in Rosalie's ear, as the latter was leaving the carriage.

"Get in, Julian, and go have tea with us," said Mr. Largely, aside to his friend, and motioning towards the carriage.

"I'm sorry I cannot," was the prompt reply, "but I suppose I shall have to make a speech to the people to-night, and I must go to my room and reflect a little."

"Oh, politics be hanged!" exclaimed Mr. Largely; "I've a vast scheme in rebel railroads to submit to you."

"In the morning, in the morning," responded the lawyer; and they parted.

Edgar Julian was what is called out West a "fine-looking" man, which phrase is usually meant to be descriptive of a large figure and a liberal, magnetic face. His light red-auburn hair was

brushed back from a forehead which, on account of great fulness at the eyebrows, appeared quite retreating. His jaws were broad and firmly set; his chin, square, and accentuated by a central dimple or depression, was almost encircled by the long crescent ends of his tan-colored mustache. His mouth was rather wide, with thin lips, and his nose was slightly aquiline. He bore himself as one well aware of his strength and well content with his environment.

That night he addressed, from a balcony of the hotel, a vast crowd in the street.

Rosalie sat at her window and heard every word of the speech. To her ears it was a strange medley of manly sentiment and brutal eloquence. It was not within her power to understand how any one could speak of the South as "that section of our country which founded its wealth and so-called prosperity upon the enforced servitude of stolen men, and then washed out that wealth and prosperity with their blood and ours it the effort to tear down our government." It thrilled her to hear such words. She never had heard anything of the sort before, and it seemed absolutely heathenish that all that vast swarm of men in the street should applaud. But there was something in the *timbre* and rich force of the speaker's voice that made her listen. By leaning from the window a little way she could see his impressive gestures and the outlines of his tall, strong form. He seemed grandly sincere and enthusiastically in earnest.

"Yes, the South is solid," he exclaimed as if measuring the words; "yes, the South is solid—solid for the old doctrines of State supremacy and negro slavery. Do not mistake my meaning when I say the South is in favor of negro slavery. I do not mean the old domestic, corporal slavery, but a worse kind, the very worst kind in a free country—political slavery. To-day the South is solid for intimidation, outrage, and all manner of fraud upon the rights of the freedmen and of the white Republicans. There is no such thing, and there never was any such thing, as political honor in the South!"

Rosalie sat for an hour listening to that earnest, finely modulated voice, and often thrilling with indignant resentment of the studied arraignment of the Southern people's political methods and motives.

A day or two later, when Mr. Edgar Julian was introduced to her, she felt guilty of sacrificing her dignity, while striving to be polite to him.

"You are from Georgia, I believe, Miss Chenier," he said, giving the perfect French pronunciation of her name, and fixing his fine deep-set eyes steadily upon her.

"Yes, sir," she replied, the "*sir*" having all the reserve and distance which a Southern person can at need throw into it.

"Georgia is a grand old State, full of lovely scenes," he said in a generalizing tone, "especially in its northern counties. Such lovely little towns it has, too: Dalton, Calhoun, Kingston, Marietta and Rome. I remember them well."

Rosalie started a little when he named Calhoun.

"You have been in Georgia?" she half-inquired, a little flush warming her cheeks.

"Yes, I was one of Sherman's boys," he replied.

She recoiled from him with a movement that he quickly interpreted. He smiled, his handsome face, unmasked for the moment, gleaming with a boy's delight in teasing a girl.

"I stole chickens all through that country," he added.

"Most of you did," she quickly retorted.

He laughed.

"Yes," he said, "we were a sad lot, and I was as bad as any. But it's all over now and the hatchet's buried."

"In your speech you did not say that."

"Oh, you've done me the honor of reading my speech?"

"No, I heard it from the window of my room."

"Well, a part of it was for effect. One must fire up the voters, you know." He spoke lightly, as suited his mood; but Rosalie chose to take him at his word literally.

"Is that right?" she gravely asked.

He frowned a little, a peculiar expression instantly gathering in his eyes. His voice had a fine, manly ring in it when he answered, —

"No. I should be glad if political discussion before the people could be on a higher plane."

"May I change the subject?" he continued, as if

shaking something off his mind. "I should like to know what you think of the North."

"I think it is delightful," she frankly said; and then they went on lightly discussing many things which lately had grown to be of great interest to her.

He drew her so far away from the subject of his recent speech, and talked so charmingly, that when he took leave of her she gave him her hand and asked him to call again, going to the full extent of old-time Southern hospitality.

Aunt Marguerite had sat by during this conversation, ostensibly busy with something else; and when he was gone she said, —

"That man will achieve a great deal, if he lives and can keep from becoming unscrupulous."

CHAPTER X.

THE RETURN.

THE impression left in Rosalie Chenier's mind by Edgar Julian was not altogether a pleasant one; and yet as the days passed, and she saw and talked with him frequently, she could not say she disliked him. There was such a lack of parallelism in their beliefs that little sharp antagonisms of feeling were constantly starting up, antagonisms whose origin lay in the very tenderest memories of one, and in the proudest memories of the other; for although Rosalie had no distinct recollection of the terrible days of the war, she had seen the humiliation of her mangled father, the uncomplaining despair of her mother, the bitter resignation of her sister, and had been thoroughly educated to hate those who were looked upon by her household as the workers of all this misery; and on the other hand, Edgar Julian was proud of his war record. He looked upon Sherman's destructive march to the sea as the grandest thing in history, and upon his own participation in it as the very flower of his life. Of course they both endeavored to shut out of their conversation everything likely to suggest their points of dif-

ference; but a hint, a comparison or an allusion would now and then come to the surface and burst like a bubble full of poisonous recollections to tinge and embitter their sentiments withal.

He very quickly discovered the narrow limitations of her knowledge and experience, and the almost infantile purity and simplicity of her nature. She was a revelation to him of the charm of utter innocence. Her lips, her eyes, her voice, the bloom of her cheeks and the outline of her beautiful form, exactly corresponded with the freshness and fragrance, so to speak, of her curiously subtle sincerity. She asked questions as a child would have done, opening wide her eyes, and waiting for the answer with slightly parted lips and a charmingly expectant air. He liked this; it pleased him to be interesting. On the other hand, Rosalie magnified his experience and knowledge, and took without question his explanations of things.

"I start to Amsterdam to-morrow," he said one day, after Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Largely had agreed upon certain terms of contract relative to their extensive railroad scheme.

"To Amsterdam! why, what for?" she exclaimed.

"To arrange some negotiations for your uncle and Mr. Largely. I hope I shall not be gone long. It will be a great bore, the journey."

"A bore! Oh, no!" she quickly said. "How I should like to go! Crossing the ocean has been my dearest, sweetest dream. My ancestors were

from the south of France, and my father has read to me and talked to me so much of the vineyards, the old ruins, the strong winds and the golden summers of his forefathers' country. I shall go some day."

If Edgar Julian, just then, could have seen a little way into the future!

"But you will find all the pleasure in anticipation," he responded, reflectively contracting his brows, as if recalling unpleasant experiences in foreign lands; "our own country is far more beautiful and interesting than the older ones."

"But our country is not itself any longer, since —" she checked herself, colored slightly, and turned to look out of the window. She was thinking of the old mill.

"Oh, there's a re-action," he said, cheerfully parrying the suggestion her abrupt silence offered. "A few years will clear things all up. But I was going to ask you to give me a commission. I should be glad to serve you. Can I fetch you or send you anything from London or Paris? It will lighten the burden of my journey to have some pleasant duties to perform aside from the dull object at Amsterdam."

"Shall you go to Paris?"

"Yes, for a few days, — a mere business call."

"But you will not be in the Southern provinces?"

"Oh, no."

"Then I can give you no commission," she said,

with a sweet, far-away smile, a haze of dreamy longing in her amber-gray eyes.

He looked intently at her, but she was not aware of the sudden scrutiny.

"Is there any special place? What town in the south of France?" he presently inquired.

"Oh, it was a foolish whim," she exclaimed, quickly recovering herself. "I was thinking how it would please papa to have some *souvenir* of his ancestral place."

"What place is it?" he carelessly inquired.

"Le chateau Chenier, near Apt, on the road from Avignon. There is much evidence, papa says, that the estate is rightfully ours."

"Ah, how romantic, even if it isn't real!" he responded, plucking his mustache, and lost in thought.

"Papa has great faith. Just before the war broke out he had got ready to go look into it; but when that came he lost everything, and —"

"This is extremely interesting," said Julian, taking advantage of her faltering; "are there any documents?"

Rosalie smiled, and holding her hands about a foot apart said, —

"A bundle this thick."

Edgar Julian's mind worked like lightning for a few moments.

"How much is the estate supposed to be worth?" he presently asked.

"Oh, I don't know; ever so much, some hun-

dreds of thousands though, quite a fortune," she replied. "I have heard papa say how much, but I have forgotten."

The mature and stalwart man sat there gazing at that lithe, beautiful girl. Some obscure feeling, hitherto unknown to him, began to stir in his bosom, as if a new element were softly diffusing itself throughout his source of consciousness. He rose, and standing a moment before her, as she half-drooped in the easy-chair, he looked down upon her shining hair as one who looks upon something grown suddenly very dear to him. His deep-set, magnetic eyes grew soft and his swarthy cheeks paled a little. He rallied, passed his hand across his forehead, and looking towards the piano said, —

"Play something for me, please; something cheering: I'm gloomy."

"I am very sorry, but I do not know the piano — I do not play," she replied.

She instantly thought of her dear old banjo at the mill.

"But haven't you a guitar? All the Southern ladies play the guitar." He spoke lightly, and resumed his seat near her.

"I play on the banjo," she said, and regretted it instantly, for Mrs. Roosevelt had charged her not to speak of this to any one.

"Oh, you're seized by the new craze!" he exclaimed. "It is the latest fashionable thing, I believe. Won't you let me hear you?"

"But I left my banjo in Georgia," she responded.

"I wish I had not. I sadly miss it sometimes." She ended with a little quick sigh.

"One misses so many things away from home," he said, "it's a great bore to go anywhere; one always has to go just at a point when one doesn't wish to, and to a place one doesn't care anything for."

He still spoke lightly, but there was a ring of real petulance in his tone.

"I am sorry you have to go away, if it will trouble you," she frankly said, looking steadily at him with her sweet mysterious eyes.

"It is ever so kind of you to sympathize with me," he replied, a gentle thrill of pleasure running over him. "I wish I were going to get back your estate, *le chateau Chenier*, for you instead of this matter of hob-nobbing with a Dutch syndicate. That would have something interesting, something delightfully romantic in it. I shouldn't mind the journey with such an object at the end of it."

That evening Mr. Julian dined at the Roosevelt table, and the subject of his mission to Amsterdam was again thoroughly discussed between him and Mr. Roosevelt, the latter giving minute and explicit directions touching the matters he desired the lawyer to arrange. Later Mr. Largely joined them, and then the whole discussion was repeated to the last particular.

Edgar Julian paid respectful attention to his employers, now and then suggesting some important detail they seemed about to overlook, but he was

uninterested. He had mastered their plans as soon as they had been disclosed to him, and all this repetition and recapitulation was irritating. The truth was, he greatly wished a further talk with Rosalie before setting out upon his journey. He could not have said just why he wished this. It was a strong desire without any readily definable reason for its existence.

But he went away without seeing her again. His railway trip to New York was tiresome, and his ocean voyage was a stormy one. All the way he found the form and face of Rosalie Chenier haunting his memory, and gently working turmoil in his imagination. He had been with her just enough to get thoroughly aware of her freshness, candor and beauty. She was so unlike any girl he had ever known, so gentle and sweet, and yet so spirited and clever. As the distance grew between them, his impressions of her unique grace and innocence took clearer form, and he spent many hours studying them.

When he was gone, Rosalie missed him in an indefinite sort of way, which made the streets of Chicago glare and the long rows of heavy buildings frown in a way she had not noticed before.

Mr. Roosevelt, having finished his business, would have been glad to return at once to Savannah; but the yellow fever had appeared in several Southern cities in a most malignant form, and he thought it best to stay in the North till it should abate.

From Chicago to Put-in Bay, thence to Saratoga, thence to Newport, staying some weeks at each place; and finally to New York city in September, our three Southerners leisurely wandered, striving to get out of their enforced absence from home all the pleasure possible.

In due time despatches and letters were received from Edgar Julian, announcing his success with the Dutch syndicate. He would not be home immediately (this was written to Mr. Largely at Chicago) as he had determined on a tour in the south of France.

It was while in New York that Mrs. Roosevelt handed Rosalie a paper in which was printed a circumstantial account of a raid made by government officials on an extensive illicit distillery situated in a secluded valley of Northern Georgia known as the "pocket." The raid had been quite successful. The distillery was demolished and a considerable amount of spirits seized. The supposed controller of this celebrated moonshine establishment, one Frank Ellis, had escaped. It was supposed that he had amassed quite a fortune from his distillery before it was destroyed. He was described as a young man of good family, handsome, bold, well educated, and exceedingly clever in conducting his operations.

A few days later Rosalie received letters from home, but not a word of reference to Frank Ellis or the revenue raid was in any of them.

It was November before the yellow fever had

entirely disappeared from the South, consequently our friends remained two months in New York, during which time Aunt Marguerite managed to let Rosalie see a good deal of society. The day on which they sailed for Savannah was unusually cold, and the streets were heaped with snow. They were glad to set their faces to the South. The voyage proved a pleasant one, however, and they reached their destination in the midst of a season of sunshine and of balmy breezes.

This return by the ocean route had been arranged by Mrs. Roosevelt. She had feared that going back through the mountains might re-arouse Rosalie's homesickness, a thing very cordially dreaded by Aunt Marguerite, whose love for her niece had grown so that it filled the whole of her life.

After five months of the excitement and changes of their wanderings and dallyings in the North, Rosalie was glad to rest awhile in the spacious quietude of the Roosevelt mansion, whose windows looked out upon sandy, shady, noiseless streets, and around whose garden walls grew a line of columnar palmetto trees.

CHAPTER XI.

AT ROOSEVELT PLACE.

THE Roosevelt mansion stood a little distance south from the Pulaski house, and fronted east on a beautiful open square or park. It was a large rectangular building of the old-time Southern architecture, surrounded by rows of palmetto trees and gnarled live-oaks. It seemed to look upon three streets with an air of aristocratic complacency, whilst upon a fourth it turned its back in gray, stolid contempt of its narrowness and sand. Many little bay-windows, like diminutive inclosed balconies, hung from the upper stories in front, overlooking a narrow court whose low wall and iron picketing were scarcely able to restrain the luxuriant clumps of cacti, banana, palm and other tropical things growing within. On one side there was a spacious veranda, on the other a great bow-window, the latter evidently a recent addition to the eccentricities of the building. About the place hung an atmosphere of its own, an individuality, a gray, antique uprightness of aspect that could not fail to attract the attention of the passer. It was so grand in size, so isolated from other residences, its

trees were so old and its court and garden so lovely, that Northern visitors to Savannah made much inquiry as to its owner and its history.

In the days of slavery, when Mr. Roosevelt and his wife were young, this house was filled with notable guests, artists and literary folk chiefly, who spent the winter months in a round of gay, but quiet and elegant social pleasures.

The only change that the war and its sequelæ had brought to this fine old house was the discontinuance of its liberal hospitalities, not on account of its owner's reduced means, but because of the general gloom and poverty which had rendered society moody, retrospective and bitter. Although Savannah had suffered little actual despoilment from the victorious army of Sherman, the downfall of slavery and the stagnation which overtook the cotton trade had wrought sad ruin to the prosperity of the lovely old city. A few men like Mr. Roosevelt had riches left over ; but by far the larger number of those who used to rule the cotton trade and the social activities of Savannah, had fallen into comparative poverty, and consequent obscurity, at the close of hostilities. The vast rice plantations of Chatham County had been allowed to go to ruin, as had also the beautiful suburban places once so charming. Even Bonaventure had grown up with wild thickets, while its fences were tumbling down. The social stagnation and decay were more marked than the physical change. With the prop of the semi-feudal system of slavery removed, the energy

of the people seemed paralyzed for a time. The very soil itself lost something of its old-time vigor. Lands that in *ante-bellum* days were highly esteemed for agricultural purposes, now lay gray and desolate, fenceless and abandoned. In the city many of the grandest mansions were sadly out of repair, rotting for want of paint, and growing ragged of roof and dilapidated as to glass and shutters. Underlying all this slumbrous appearance there rested a half-sullen, half-inquiring spirit which might become despair or enterprise just as the influences might finally lead.

The Roosevelts had managed to keep together a little coterie of immediate friends to whom they dispensed a liberal hospitality in something like the old Southern style, but none of their Northern friends had returned since the war. No doubt many of the latter were dead, and the rest swept past Savannah every winter in the gay stream of pleasure-hunters going to Jacksonville, Fernandina and the upper waters of the St. John's.

Mrs. Roosevelt dreamed of making Rosalie the means of relighting the social fires in her house, and she was not disappointed. The strong and merry mountain girl brought a breath of the up-country with her. She had her hours of homesickness, it is true, and cried over her father's letters; but she rallied readily, taking up her cheerfulness and girlish activity where she left off, and making the most of the opportunities her surroundings offered. She was, in some indefinite way, aware

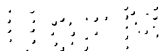
that she was taking into her life some new and powerful elements. An exhilaration, as of one who for the first time stands on a high place and sees a vast landscape spread around him, kept her eyes alert and bright, deepened the carmine in her cheeks and lent a springiness to her spirit which showed itself in every movement. The air of repose and oldness which rested upon the low country captivated her imagination as perfectly as had the reading of the dreamy romances of Provence and Languedoc. The salt breezes coming in from Thunderbolt and Whitemarsh and Tybee, the warm gray sand, the old gray houses, the tropical trees and plants, the dreamy quietude, were immediately supplemented in her mind by what she had read and heard her father read under the mulberry-tree beside the old mill-door in the "pocket." It seemed as if she had come into the land of Jaques Jasmin, the land of "*L' Abuglo de Castèl-Cuillé*," of "*Françonnette*" and "*Mes Souvenirs*," her father so dearly loved. Here was a convent, deep-walled and silent, there a gray old church sunken among its mossy trees. She imagined the wind from the Mediterranean, she fancied old ruins of castles along the country roads. She had been delighted with Chicago, she was enraptured by Savannah. She was a true child of the South; the hot sands, the fervid sky, the broad-flowing winds, called upon the deepest elements of her nature. The gaudy cushions and hangings of the Northern hotels and parlor cars, and the elegant, ultra-modern interiors of Chicago

and New York mansions, had not prepared her for what awaited her in the home of Aunt Marguerite, —and yet she was quite prepared. She took her place in it as though she had been born there. All her reading, all her father's talk to her, had prepared her from childhood for the romance of the place, its twilight air, its amplitude, its rich, dark simplicity of furniture, its rare library, its objects of *vertu* from many lands, its dreamy nooks and corners, its statuary, its old dim pictures, its massive stairways and ponderous panelled doors.

She was a bright bird for such a cage, and she made her rare sweetness felt throughout its slumbrous atmosphere.

In a little while Rosalie had made acquaintances among the young people of her aunt's set, one of them, Mildred Fain, becoming her devoted friend. Miss Fain was three years older than Rosalie, a petite brunette, with finely cut features and a faultless grace of manner. Her family traced itself back to the early days of the city, where it was honorably connected with colonial history. Her grandfather had been a cabinet officer, or something of the sort, under a Democratic administration, and her father had fallen, a distinguished Confederate general, in one of the terrible battles of the Virginia campaigns. In many points she was quite Rosalie's opposite. She had read very little in a general way, and, saving some acquaintance with the old English writers, all her knowledge was of the kind which is caught from one's surroundings and asso-

ciations; so that, whilst she betrayed an almost total lack of taste for recent books and art, she reflected most charmingly the texture and limitations of the society in which she had been reared. The sweet formal dignity of her manner, and the reserve which lurked in the modulations and intonations of her purely Southern voice, were peculiarly winning. Rosalie loved her from the beginning; and in fact, that sweet affection that girls have for each other was quickly formed between them, greatly exaggerated by their wholly opposite temperaments and characteristic elements. They found in each other something new and fascinating, quite unlike what usually draws girls together. They soon fully confided in each other; and so Rosalie discovered that Miss Fain had a lover, a Colonel Warren Talbot, lawyer and politician, whose name seemed much honored by the daily newspapers of Savannah. This young man often dropped in at the Roosevelt mansion to smoke and chat awhile with Mr. Roosevelt, but it chanced to be some weeks after her first momentary meeting with him that Rosalie found herself in conversation with him on the broad veranda. It was the merest accident, this little *tête-à-tête*, but Colonel Warren Talbot found it a most charming bit of experience. He went away with many of the fresh and suggestive phrasings of this bright mountain girl's talk ringing in his mind like haunting snatches of some sweetly simple song. Her silvery voice and sincerity of expression, her gray-brown eyes, her dewy, smil-



ing lips, and her gracious innocence of bearing, were a bewitching revelation to him.

"What a delightfully *naïve* and pretty girl your new friend is!" he said to Miss Fain soon after.

"I'm quite charmed that you think so," responded that young lady; "she is the very sweetest girl I ever saw; and she knows so much, and is so brilliant too, and so good and kind, and altogether unlike any other girl I ever saw."

"Oh," exclaimed the Colonel, gayly, "you are an accomplished eulogist. Go on, however, — it is a bird singing of a bird, one flower shaking out its perfume on another, — it's all very beautiful."

The next time he went to Roosevelt place he again talked with Rosalie. He had not been much in the North, and her vivid descriptions of the great cities and the social whirlpools into which she had merely dipped whilst there, were to him as charming as anything of the sort could be, and they gave him as immediate an impression of Western power and Eastern agility as if they had been sketches and photographs of the scenes and persons mentioned.

"I like those people," she said, in a tone of enthusiasm; "their vim and movement, their alert eyes and bright shrewd faces, give one the idea of irresistible energy."

"Yes, it is a pity that such energy could not be directed for a time toward building up what it tore down," said Colonel Talbot, rather grimly; "but they seem to be entirely destitute of a conscience."

"I believe you are wrong," replied Rosalie

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quickly. "They have convictions and they are immensely philanthropic. It is a paradise of churches and public schools between Chicago and New York. I remember Indiana as a vast plain dotted with school-houses and little white Methodist, Campbellite and Presbyterian churches."

"That goes for nothing," he responded, "and even supports my assertion. If they really were possessed of true Christian enlightenment they would seek to save the South and not to waste it more. Their churches are shams and their school-houses the breeding-places of hate."

"Oh, you remind me of Mr. Edgar Julian, of Chicago. I heard him make a speech, and he talked about the South just as you do about the North. He said of us that we are as malignant as our swamps, as barren of wise energy as our climate, and as unresponsive to culture as is our soil to cultivation."

"And you believed every word!" exclaimed Colonel Talbot, looking at her with a strange gleam in his handsome dark face. "He convinced you that he was right!"

"Not exactly," she said, "but it is perplexing. When you come across the line from the North to the South you step from a mighty activity to a broad repose; you somehow feel the atmosphere change."

"It is like passing forth from a blooming and fragrant forest into the track of a last year's hurricane, isn't it?" he asked in a pleasing minor key.

"I do not know what it is like," she replied, as if hunting for some apt comparison. "It is more as if the sun had faded the soil and dried up the people's energies."

"Then you like the North better than the South?" he remarked in a careless tone, but fixing his eyes questioningly upon her.

"No, sir: I like the South immeasurably better," she quickly responded, a half-suppressed rebuke coming with her words.

Near where they sat a group of three huge banana stalks grew beside a low wall, their broad tropical leaves swaying and richly rustling in the breeze. A picturesque palmetto-tree, inclosed in a trellis of the dry stems of its fallen fans, stood just beyond the sidewalk outside the little iron gate. The yellow sunlight seemed to run in waves along the gray sand of the street. They could see below the veranda's eaves a strip of blue sky in the south which had in it the heat and glory of the semi-tropics. Rich languors and fleeting fruity perfumes were in the air.

Rosalie had lifted her bright face, with her happy lips slightly apart and her hazy, bewildering eyes half-shut. She seemed to be drinking in the subtle effluence of things.

Colonel Warren Talbot was a thorough man of the South, both physically and mentally. Tall, well-proportioned, with olive complexion and large dark eyes, finely cut features, black hair, mustache and imperial, a refined haughty bearing, and a

voice possessed of all the passionate music of the low country, he was a representative of the long-boasted chivalry which in the proud days of slavery kept alive the mediæval fires and enthroned physical courage and literal purity at the expense of liberal humanities.

"As compared with your North Georgia mountains, how do you like our low country?" he presently said, as if to change the subject.

"Oh, I cannot compare the two, they are so different. But I am charmed with everything here. Our life in the 'pocket' is sweet and drowsy, much as it is here; but there we have no society, no beautiful homes, no tropical things, no churches, no theatres." She said this in a voice indicative of retrospection. A vision of the old mill was hovering before her. She heard the water bubbling over the big mossy wheel.

"Your aunt, Mrs. Roosevelt, has been describing the 'pocket' and the mill to me," he said, "and I imagine you must have found life there delightfully calm and uneventful, almost Arcadian in its simplicity and evenness."

"Would you call an uneventful and simple life delightful?" she demanded, looking quickly and earnestly into his face.

He hesitated a moment, and then said frankly, —

"No, I like excitement."

"So do I," she exclaimed with a little flush in her cheeks. "That is why I like the North. It is all excitement."

"Well, Savannah will not be so dull after a few weeks," he said, in the tone of one who apologizes; "when the Northern tourists begin to arrive they will make quite a movement in our streets and parks."

He had risen while speaking, and was now standing before her as if in the act of going, his tall, singularly erect form outlined against the clump of banana-stalks. She felt the effect of his personal magnetism, in some indefinable way, without the slightest thought of what it was. He was regarding her with grave, clouded eyes. He felt bewildered by her rare beauty. She seemed to him as fresh and pure and simply sweet as some dew-dashed mountain violet.

"But Savannah doesn't appear dull to me," she said, rising to say good-by; "it is quite interesting. I am going to like it ever so much."

"That is very kind of you, Miss Chenier," he said, bowing low over the exquisite little hand she gave him.

"Come to see us often," she *naïvely* added. "You know my aunt has made me the mistress of Roosevelt place, and I intend to be exceedingly hospitable."

"I have been coming here since my earliest boyhood," he said. "I am glad I shall have a continuance of the privilege. This house has always had a strange charm for me, quite apart from the social and hospitable aspect."

"It is a place one grows attached to at once, a

sort of dream-palace. I have really found myself half-expecting to come across the old lamp of Aladdin amongst my aunt's *bric-à-brac*." She said this very lightly, but Colonel Talbot's warm imagination seized the suggestion, and he silently wondered if this simple child of the mountains would not indeed find some source of magic hidden away in this vast twilight place, to glorify her life withal.

He went away, bearing with him a semi-consciousness of a sweet influence caught from her. The light of her eyes, the low melody of her voice, with its slight up-country peculiarities, and the gleam of her pale gold hair, lingered in his mind. He walked along in the shady street under the china-trees and the moss-hung live-oaks, with his eyes bent upon the ground. He did not see Miss Fain and her mother as they slowly were driven by in an open landau.

CHAPTER XII.

A SUBURBAN DRIVE.

NOT long after the conversation set forth in the preceding chapter, Rosalie, together with a number of her new friends, was driven down to Thunderbolt and Bonaventure to enjoy an afternoon rambling amid the quiet and lovely scenes of that famous locality. It is a drive of five or six miles along a smooth shell road, white as lime and hard as a pavement. On either hand woods and fields alternate. In places there are wild boggy spots where dense thickets of reeds, vines and flowering weeds and briers shut out the view, whilst now and then long vistas open, down which one may look through a soft gloom to far-away bits of water or brown flats of fallow land. Some old crumbling lunettes, the remnants of a long line of fortifications, lie beside the way, covered with gray weeds and bearded grass, obscured, as military glory so often and so justly is, by the humble accidents of peaceful days. Houses, quite unpretentious as to size and architectural design, but old and interestingly weather-beaten, were sunken amid a wild luxuriance of trees, vines and Spanish moss.

Gardens half-hedged with rows of semi-tropical plants and fruit-trees lay smiling in the golden sunshine. Here and there the negroes were hoeing, or plowing, or sitting upon the decaying stoops of their cabins in nonchalant, picturesque idleness. Overhead the sky was turquoise, near the horizon it was pale gray shot with amber, an effect noticed by every artist who has sketched on the Southern coast. A light breeze blew in from the sea across the salt marshes, bringing with it the peculiar odor of rushes and tide-mud.

As the varying scenes of the landscape drew past her, Rosalie was conscious of the effect, a dreamful exhilaration creeping through her frame; but she was not aware of how much it was heightening her beauty. Aunt Marguerite, who was in the carriage with her, saw the unwonted radiance of her face, and felt the peculiar satisfaction of one who notes the progress of a cherished experiment. She inwardly gloated over her niece's ready flexibility and adaptability to her new surroundings. It was an adaptability, too, without any change, save an intensification and expansion of her original sincerity, simplicity and *verve*. All the rapid shifting of scenes and influences through which Rosalie had been hurried during the last few months had done nothing more than open a little wider the petals of her rare girlish loveliness of character. Her nature had taken in everything with a healthy hunger, and had assimilated it with that certainty which comes of the spontaneous and unconscious action of strong and perfect faculties.

Mildred Fain sat beside Rosalie in the carriage, and Aunt Marguerite shrewdly compared together, in her mind, the two beautiful girls; one petite, quiet, reserved, almost languid, with her dark Southern face full of underglows and suppressed warmth; the other, fair, alert, strong, her gray eyes wide open as a child's, her hair shining like harvest gold, and her lips sensitive as the petals of a flower.

It was a pardonable weakness in Aunt Marguerite to feel a special pride in what she considered Rosalie's points of superiority over Miss Fain. She already indulged all a mother's fondness for her "mountain Rose," as she sometimes called her, and she also nursed all a mother's self-satisfaction in a daughter's beauty and loveliness.

The carriages entered Bonaventure through a wide gateway, passing at once into an atmosphere of shade and solemnity. Huge live-oaks spread their arms above the road, and trailed their long drapery of funereal moss to within a few feet of the ground. Many weather-stained tombs and a number of snowy cenotaphs were scattered through the dark grove. The breeze from over Whitemarsh brought its saltish breath under the canopy, and shook the clumps of undergrowth and the long streamers of air-plant. A broad creek or arm of the river, in which the tide was at the flood, came in sight at the end of long vistas, shining with the bluish gleam of silver. But even here in this heavy shade, with the breeze washing through, there was

a pervading heat, a palpitating current of summer fervor, which thrilled through the blood like strong wine. Rosalie leaned out of the carriage, and for a moment Colonel Talbot, from his place in another vehicle, saw her bright hair tossed about her forehead by the wind, and her happy face turned by merest chance toward him. The next motion of the carriage shut out the vision. He turned to his nearest companion, a Mrs. Farley (tall, dignified and a widow), and half-closing his eyes said, —

“Miss Chenier is a singularly beautiful girl, I think.”

“Yes, quite pretty and sweet,” Mrs. Farley replied, “and I daresay good.”

Colonel Talbot smiled as if he thoroughly understood the guarded phrasing of his companion’s speech. He added, —

“She’s extremely clever too, or —”

“Unsophisticated,” interrupted Mrs. Farley.

“Yes, I should have said that; but she is very interesting. She has decided opinions of her own, and expresses them with a sincerity and readiness as refreshing as an up-country breeze.”

“Oh, is she strong-minded?”

“Not in the sense you suggest. She is not obtrusive. She is charmingly *naïve* and original in conversation, taking one unaware with her questions and suggestions, like a child. I suspect that she’s a genuine mountain violet, fresh, sweet and —”

“Don’t, Colonel Talbot,” cried Mrs. Farley;

"keep some of the adjectives for future use. I can interpret your feelings without any further waste of words."

"Your interpretation would be as far from correct as any guess of the pragmatists who pretend to explain the beautiful myths of the old poets," he said, looking away and stroking his long mustache.

"I should not turn your poetry into prose at all," she added softly; "I should give it a very deep and tender meaning."

"Deep and tender," he repeated; "those are adjectives, I believe. You may reserve them for future use. I imagine Miss Chenier has a mountaineer for a lover, a strong, bold young fellow of the true North Georgian type."

"Oh, no doubt of it; but she'll soon forget him now," she replied.

"Girls usually do," he said dryly.

The carriages had come into a thinner space of the wood bordering on the river. The bluff was high, overlooking a beautiful expanse of sheeny water. A salt meadow, or rush-field, extended from the opposite edge of the river to the distant hummock island, which was covered with a heavy forest, save where two or three small plantations had been carved out. Some oyster-boats were down the stream, the fishermen standing in them handling their long heavy tongs, bowing and rising, their attitudes sharply outlined against the glimmering background. Beyond a palmetto island in the southeast, a long line of smoke hovered on the

horizon, probably from a steam-tug working in some one of the creeks or inlets below Thunderbolt.

They all got out of their carriages, and were soon scattered about among the tombs and flower-beds of that incomparably beautiful old place.

Rosalie sat down alone on the verge of the bluff in the shade of a tree. She, who from childhood had revelled in wind, was fascinated with this steady breeze from the sea. The broad areas of silver and emerald spread out before her, the bright sky above, and the picturesque clumps of palmetto-trees in the distance suited the mood into which the drive through the cemetery had led her. She recalled the islands to which Jasmin, the Provencal troubadour, and his ragged associates used to go for fagots in his childhood, as recorded in those charming "*souvenirs*" her father used to read to her. Somehow all her idle imaginings (every young girl has them) bore some relation to Provence, owing very much, no doubt, to the legend of the Chenier inheritance there, and to the many stories told and read to her by Colonel Chenier touching that land of the vine and the silk-worm. She had read a great deal too, of how poor hopeless invalids had found their health renewed in the warm equable climate of Provence; and now sitting there with the steady, fragrant breeze from the Atlantic pouring upon her, she fancied she was inhaling a breath from the lemon-groves and fig orchards, the mulberry-trees and the olives of southern France, full of the very

elixir of life. These were the merest idle imaginings, coming and going like the palpitations of the breeze. She threw handfuls of the clean sand down the bluff, smiling now and then as she was able to make a few coarser grains reach the water below. A big pelican came along near her, flying heavily, with its neck drawn in and its pouch distended. She could hear the rustling of its wings as they beat against the wind. Marsh-hens and plovers rose from the rushes at intervals, and after hovering in the air a moment dropped back again and disappeared. It chanced that her friends wandered some distance away from where she sat, so that she was quite alone when a tall man approached and stopped within a few feet of her. She instantly recognized Frank Ellis, notwithstanding his changed appearance. He was no longer a mountaineer or a "moonshiner" in dress, being fashionably and tastefully clad. He bore in his hand a small cane. It seemed that he did not at once make sure of his right to speak. Rosalie had not changed much, it is true, but she hardly looked like the coarsely dressed miller-girl of the "pocket," as she sat there arrayed in the latest and most elegant style of walking-dress. She rose at once, and a quick flush came into her cheeks.

"Ah, Miss Chenier," he said in those old fluent tones, so persuasive and melodious, "you have not forgotten me, I hope."

"Oh, no, Mr. Ellis, I am glad to see you," she responded, taking a step or two forward, and

holding out her hand to him. "Are you directly from the mill?"

"No," he said, "I have been here for some time. I am a resident of Savannah now. But you were the last person I was expecting to meet to-day. You are not alone?"

He had taken her hand, and was holding it while he looked down into her upturned beautiful face, all rosy with the emotion of thus unexpectedly meeting a friend from the "pocket" with news from home, possibly.

"Then you haven't seen papa recently?" she inquired, without noticing his own question.

"No," he answered; "I had trouble with the Revenue men. They destroyed my manufactory, and I had a close struggle for my liberty."

"I remember," she said; "I saw it in a paper."

"It's quite settled now," he added: "I compromised with them — bribed them in other words — and so am quite free again. I have opened a broker's office here in Savannah." He spoke with the confident freedom of a man well grounded in his own estimation, and full of assurance that he should get on well with others. He stood erect, strong, defiant, handsome. His eyes had lost the old restlessness and watchfulness.

As they stood thus, he holding her hand, they made a very striking picture, and a very strange one, to the eyes of Miss Mildred Fain, who just then approached them, and stopped as she noticed the stranger.

Rosalie quickly withdrew her hand and turned, all flushed as she was, in time to see the look of half-surprise, half-deprecation which passed across the face of Mildred.

"Come here, Mildred," she said quickly, "this is a friend from the 'pocket.' We met here by the merest chance." A self-consciousness of manner rather than self-consciousness in fact, put her in a wrong light before both Ellis and Miss Fain. It was as if she had been discovered in some compromising situation, when, in truth, she was wholly unaware of any improper appearance connected with what her friend had just seen.

At this moment Aunt Marguerite joined them. Her sharp little eyes recognized Ellis promptly, and a gleam almost malignant shot out from them. She stopped short, close to him, and with a quick glance from head to foot, took in the great improvement in his personal appearance. Her mind worked with that swiftness and certainty so valuable in a sudden crisis. The first impulse was to ignore him, and hurry Rosalie away from his presence; but caution whispered her that this might arouse that perversity for which young girls who fancy themselves in love are noted. Then, too, Miss Fain was present, and there might be a scene. She changed her manner in a moment.

"Why, Mr. Ellis, this is quite a surprise," she said in that cold, half-careless tone which is used toward one who is a mere valueless acquaintance. She gave him her hand, however, and turned towards Miss Fain; but she had walked away.

"I am glad to see you looking so well, Mrs. Roosevelt," he said, throwing into his voice an irresistible music. "Your summer sojourn in the North must have been pleasant. Is Mr. Roosevelt well?"

"Yes, quite, thank you." She dared not trust herself to say more.

He was ready, however, and went easily forward into graceful talk, drawing her out in spite of herself, and, after a manner, winning upon her interest if not her respect. He was a charming talker in every way, and his knowledge of human nature was broad and accurate.

Colonel Talbot and Mrs. Farley had seated themselves on a log, the bole of a tree cut down in the course of some improvement of the grounds, and were surveying the wide expanse of water, islands and marshes through an opera-glass. While Mrs. Farley was thus amusing herself she chanced to bring the glass to bear on the group by the river composed of Rosalie and young Ellis. He was holding her hand and gazing intently down into her face. It was a very suggestive situation. Mrs. Farley did not know who was the young man, but she could be sure he was a lover, she thought. After looking for a moment she handed the glass to Colonel Talbot, and pointing in the direction, said, —

"See if you can make out the young man with Miss Chenier on the bluff yonder."

He looked, and when he had succeeded in find-

ing the proper line of vision he started, not perceptibly to any one but himself, and watched the little tableau develop as has been described.

"It is some friend to Miss Chenier," he presently said, as Mrs. Roosevelt came upon the scene, "but I do not know him. He must be a visitor to Savannah, I think, a Northerner possibly."

"But he is not a Northerner," said Mrs. Farley. "His face and manner deny the possibility. He *may* be a North Georgian, however."

Colonel Talbot lowered the glass, and looked at his companion.

"He would be her mountain lover, then," he said, smiling complacently, and turning the opera-glass over and over in his hand.

"Well, neither you nor I need care as to that," she replied. "But I do wonder who he is."

She took the glass and looked again.

"Ah, Mrs. Roosevelt has joined them," she exclaimed. "He is no stranger to her, that is plain. He is strikingly handsome — *distingué* — a military man possibly. I wish I could hear what he is saying. No doubt it is vastly interesting."

Mrs. Farley was a clever woman, and she rarely did or said anything, no matter how apparently light and unstudied, without having some well-defined object in view. She had begun to suspect that Colonel Talbot felt some sort of tender interest in Miss Chenier, and she was now endeavoring to surprise him into something like a confession of it. But he was too reserved and self-poised to be

caught in her slender net. He knew her better than she thought, and he played with her webs without seeming aware of their existence.

Ellis did not remain long at Bonaventure. After a short conversation with Mrs. Roosevelt and her niece, he went away, but not before Rosalie had invited him to call at the mansion.

From Bonaventure to the little fishing town of Thunderbolt is but a few minutes' drive over a white sandy road.

It was at Thunderbolt that Colonel Talbot had begun his military career, as a junior officer in a company of the 63d Georgia Regiment, while he was yet low in his teens. He took Miss Fain and Rosalie and showed them the old earth-works where the heavy guns had been planted. There were the remnants of a palmetto log pen, which had once been covered with sand-bags and used as a powder-magazine.

"Out there," he said, pointing toward the middle of the river, "the celebrated gunboat, built by the ladies, used to lie at anchor awaiting its opportunity to steam out and surprise the enemy's fleet."

"And what became of it?" asked Rosalie.

He smiled grimly and replied, —

"One day its opportunity came, and it steamed bravely out, but it didn't surprise the enemy's fleet, and it didn't get back. It was knocked to pieces down near fort Pulaski."

"Everything Confederate was knocked to pieces sooner or later," said Miss Fain.

"I do not wonder it was so since I have seen the North," said Rosalie. "That country teems with population; and such energy! One county in Illinois has more genuine human power in it than all I have seen of Georgia."

Her companions became silent at once. They did not care to urge any objections to what she had said, and yet they did not relish it.

A short distance down the river a small sail-boat was running close to the wind, and a few white-capped waves danced in the sun.

Rosalie climbed up a formless mass which had once been the wall of the fortification, and stood on the highest point, her fine, graceful form set against the background of gray-blue sky. Colonel Talbot and Miss Fain, from their places below, looked up at her as at a star or some diviner vision. They each on the instant felt the danger of her beauty. They looked at each other, half-divining that their thought was common.

As for Rosalie, she allowed her fancy just then to run away across the sea in search of Edgar Julian. She wondered where he was, what he was seeing and doing. He had written back that he was going into the south of France. Would he stop in Provence? Would he hunt for the old Chateau Chenier? Would he try to discover anything about her father's supposed inheritance?

They drove home in the sweet Southern twilight, with the silver horn of the new moon gleaming upon them from the western sky.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS.

ONE day Rosalie's banjo came by express. This was in response to a request she had embodied in a letter to her father, after she had striven in vain to make the fine old piano in Mrs. Roosevelt's parlor banish her desire for the simpler instrument. No doubt it was a very foolish act to kiss the banjo, but she did it with genuine passion. Had it not been her beloved companion from her childhood? Was it not one of the old mill's inmates throughout her sweet, crude life in the "pocket"? Ought it not to share her happiness in this ampler life at the Roosevelt mansion? She turned its keys, she swept its strings. Its pure, short notes cut through air that never before had palpitated with music so plebeian. The sounds brought quick tears to her eyes, and her lips quivered. It would be unjust to say that any foolish sentiment caused her emotion. A very natural homesickness had preyed upon her mind at intervals since coming to Savannah, and, of course, every letter from the "pocket," and every other special reminder of the old mill, aggravated the malady.

On the same day that brought the banjo, a letter also came to Rosalie from Grafty Jones, who had spent many days in its composition. The manner in which this missive was directed disclosed the writer's forlorn solicitude.

TOO MISS ROSY CHENIER,
In pertickler Kare of
Mrs. Margret Roosevelt.

Savanha

In gret Hast.

Gorgia.

The moment she saw this superscription Rosalie knew that Grafty Jones had written it, though she never before had seen his writing. The very letters looked like him. Their attitudes were characteristic of him. The envelope, made by his own hand out of coarse brown paper, was sealed with sweet-gum, whose odor brought up in Rosalie's mind thoughts of the shady groves above the mill, where she used to vie with the little sap-drinking woodpeckers in gathering the fragrant liquid-amber.

She read the letter with extreme difficulty, owing to the ludicrous nature of its contents and to the almost incomprehensible spelling.

She resisted the sudden impulses toward laughter, because Grafty Jones had been her friend, and because she knew how sincere were his professions. His poor cramped nature was enclosed in those very nearly formless pot-hooks scrawled upon that broad, coarse sheet, and she respected its arid poverty.

One sentence ran thus: "Ef yer cood of mared me, I wood of ben hapy; but I don't see no pees now."

Farther on he wrote, "Hit makes me hoam sik when I go too the mil and don't see yer eny more. The mil hit souns loansum an onhapy."

How dry and meagre and spiritless, and yet how like the "pocket," the whole of the letter was! Rosalie laughed, and hated herself for it, when she read, "Sum time when Im plown fur wheet I look over at the mil an feel like crine cos yur gon, and yisterdy the wind blode down the big sasfras tre by our stable."

It was as if she stood once more by the meal-trough at the mill and held open the bag while Grafty shovelled in the meal and talked to her in his wandering way. No member of the old mill's household had written her a letter giving so immediate a touch of the spirit which brooded over the "pocket." Her father's epistles always had a literary, even a pedantic flavor; her sister wrote short, loving notes with nothing racy of the old life in them; and as for her mother, she was an invalid and rarely wrote at all. So that, despite its distasteful allusions to his hopeless love, the letter of Grafty Jones proved a sort of waft from the mountains, with here and there a smack of true fragrance in it, as, for instance, "I sot sum traps and kotch leven quales. Sucker fish is bitin now. The crap of ches nutr is good. The leeves on the big sweet gum bi the mil is red as fier. Fokes was most

dun strippin fodder when that big frost cum. I hav quit chawin tobacker, but I smoak moren ever, cos Im loansum sence yu went awa."

Rosalie's memory was wonderfully quickened by the suggestions thus awkwardly thrown into that cramped and scraggly chirography. She heard the whistling of the quails in the dry, gray weed-fields slanting up against the hills. The chestnut-burrs were open and the brown nuts were pattering down. The red leaves of the odorous sweet-gum rustled until she could almost hear them; and the allusion to stripping fodder brought up the peculiar custom among the mountaineers of pulling off the blades from the standing Indian corn, tying them into small bundles called "hands," and hanging them behind the corn-ears to dry. She could see the disrobed stalks shining in the sunlight, their dry, brown tassels tapering and pointed, like the spearheads of a mediæval army.

But Grafty's letter had a depressing effect, and it was with a feeling of relief that Rosalie turned from it to read one addressed to her uncle from Mr. Edgar Julian.

"Here is something that may interest you," Mr. Roosevelt had said, as he handed her this missive postmarked at some town in the south of France. "The latter part of it is really meant for you to read. I judge you will be charmed with it."

"Oh, it is from Mr. Julian," she exclaimed, almost joyfully, as she glanced at the signature. "He is in the south of France, sure enough. And such a long letter!"

She kissed her uncle in thankful anticipation of some news from "le Chateau Chenier," and ran off to the nearest window-seat to read.

Mr. Roosevelt stood for a moment contemplating her. This was the first time his fascinating adoptive daughter had ever kissed him. He was a shrewd old fellow; he suspected that kiss as being meant to go clear across the Atlantic. He thought it not worth while to make any remarks, however, and with a bland smile on his semi-Jewish face, he went away to his office.

Rosalie's hand trembled as she held the letter. Her eyes ran rapidly over the clear, rather small writing, scarcely the half of which had anything to do with Mr. Roosevelt's business. Evidently Mr. Edgar Julian had done valiant and valuable work in behalf of the railroad schemes of his employers, for he had sent back the contract of the "Dutch Syndicate" duly approved, signed and sealed. A matter so completely finished needed very few words of explanation. But turning from railroad diplomacy to something which seemed to interest him pleasantly, he wrote as follows:—

"I promised Miss Chenier that I would look up the old estate in Provence to which her father thought he might have some claim." (It may be said here that Rosalie could not remember any such promise.) "I have seen le Chateau Chenier—it still bears the name; a most lovely old ruin in the midst of vineyards and fig-orchards, and rimmed round with olive-crowned hills. The cha-

teau itself is not inhabitable, save that one tumble-down wing has been kept as a pretence of shelter for a family of peasants, of a very low order, I should say ; but the place has been a grand one. If one had lived a few hundred years ago one would have loved such a home, for it was then a fair castle in the centre of the world's charmingest region. The estate is quite valuable, even now, and its ownership seems in doubt. After all, Miss Chenier's father may be the rightful claimant. If he could establish his title, a few thousand dollars judiciously expended would make the whole place a garden of beauty. This climate is enchanting. I should like to settle here with a colony of my own picking. The wind and the sunshine, and the fragrance of things, fill one with a sense of the value of mere existence. But the people are dry and stolid on the one hand, or gushing and monstrously inclined to exaggeration on the other. I hold that no country whose laboring classes wear *sabots* is safe to live in. It has the appearance of decay in its last stage. Sandals, bare feet and wooden shoes are not the accompaniments of progress. In walking about among the people and the buildings here I am constantly reminded of ashes. Indeed, I am not sure but that the fervent sun of this climate has slowly burned up everything. Such energy as we have in our great West might not be able to resist it through many generations, especially if we should fall into this wine-drinking habit. Everywhere one goes here one sees wine used like water, and a

great deal of it is a villanous sour stuff unfit for hogs to drink. . . . They tell us that this region was once the centre of European literary culture ; that here the fragrant dregs of Roman civilization, and through the Roman, the Greek artistic refinements, were left over after Italy had become a cinder. These lemon-groves and vineyards, these old chateaux, these stony hills and drowsy valleys, ought to be the ideal region for the poets ; but it seems they could not stay : the climate made dust of them by a dreamy process of slow combustion. Some of the old picturesque things and some of the poetical customs still linger here, and there is a sort of Rose-of-Provence odor and dewiness on the night air which quite compensates for the daytime sultriness.

“If you deem it worth while, you may let Miss Chenier read this. She spoke to me of Provence, and her father’s attachment for this particular region ; and whilst I hardly feel at liberty to write to her directly, I have hoped that this method of sending her a mere sketch of her ancestral country might not be thought impertinent.

“Le Chateau Chenier seems to be the oldest place in this immediate neighborhood, not only on account of its ruined condition, but judging from the character of its architecture. The landed estate pertaining to the chateau is of considerable extent, and might be made exceedingly remunerative by intelligent management. Yesterday I stood upon a sort of ruined tower and looked over the landscape.

If Miss Chenier could have seen it she would have been in love more than ever with the supposed birthplace of her ancestors. It is an old neglected garden of the South."

Rosalie read and reread the letter, lingering over the descriptive sentences, and striving to get at what was not expressed. She tried to make out, from the writer's elusive touches, an outline of the chateau and its environs. The effort was futile. Her imagination took light hold of the sordid part of this Provençal heritage. It busied itself more vigorously with the fine poetical romance. Rosalie was not impractical, however, and one of her first thoughts was of sending this letter, or a copy of certain parts of it, to her father. He would be interested, if not benefited. Anything concerning Provence captivated his attention at once. In this he was a typical Southerner of the highest order. The mediæval spirit, as it existed during the two hundred years of Provençal glory, when knight-hood and love and song and honor, each and all, were superbly arrayed and arranged in spectacular order, was the spirit of the old South when slavery was in its prime. Jousts and tournaments took the form of social contests for superiority in all that made hospitality charming and virtue safe; and despite the stain of human bondage, the old *régime* was that of the purest and most lovable aristocracy the world has ever seen. The best people were not mere men and women then: they were ladies and gentlemen, knights and dames, even kings and

queens in all but name, and they delighted in mediæval customs thinly disguised to suit the changed order of things. They were not cramped in their social and domestic arrangements by the petty accidents and incidents of those establishments which are dependent upon hired freemen and democrats, and their wives and sweethearts. They ordered and were obeyed. Their slaves were theirs for life, or until sold. In a word, the old Southern aristocracy was the latest flower of mediæval chivalry. Its conservatism had shut out art, literature and social reform. Not that it did not read, or buy pictures and statuary, and encourage a high social standard; but it did not produce art, and it did not allow any innovations in literature or any remodeling of domestic or social arrangements. It read "Mysteries of Udolpho," and "Scottish Chiefs," and all the older romances. It loved the chase, it adored physical prowess, it set great value on the chastity of women. It was, in fact, a modernized and Americanized reproduction of the aristocracy of the Troubadours, and if it did not have its *tensons*, its *cour d'amour*, its *chansons de geste* and all the rest, it had the pomp and lavish hospitality, the dangerous rivalry and deadly feuds, the clash of weapons in honorable fray, and all the stately formalities of a long-buried age.

So if Colonel Chenier still found comfort in nursing a dream of Provence, it was nothing strange. For when one pauses and reflects, one can find nothing over which a true Southerner can sincerely

mourn as a sectional calamity, save the downfall of that strange remnant of the middle ages, the aristocracy of slaveholders. All admit that the extinguishment of slavery itself was right; but the overthrow of the grand social and domestic fabric that the slaves had given their labor to sustain was quite another thing. It was in the name of chivalry and for the perpetuation of the mediæval spirit that the young soldiery of the Southern Confederacy fought, and not merely for the salvation of negro slavery.

Rosalie, after she had finally done with Mr. Edgar Julian's letter, and had prepared excerpts from it for her father, went about the house for days with sunny visions of Provence blending with sweet memories of the little valley of North Georgia. She was preparing for a party her aunt had arranged to give. There were many things to do — mere trifles, of course, but necessary. Between duties she played upon the banjo, and sang the old simple songs with a power and tenderness of expression that charmed Mr. Roosevelt.

Colonel Talbot called quite frequently, and his attentions to Rosalie were a source of trouble to Aunt Marguerite, who could not even remotely contemplate the possibilities suggested without the keenest pangs of selfishness. Rosalie was her treasure, her life.

Of course, as for Colonel Talbot, he was a most honorable man, of high family and ample fortune.

The connection would be a desirable one in many respects; but the thought of losing Rosalie was more distasteful than death itself. There is no love so foolishly selfish and strong as the love of the old for the young.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A GENIUS FROM THE UP-COUNTRY.

IN her extreme and somewhat childish solicitude touching the proper management of Rosalie's affairs, Mrs. Roosevelt found herself in quite a dilemma. Young Ellis had begun to call at the mansion, and had managed to make a very favorable impression upon Mr. Roosevelt. To say the truth, this dashing, eloquent mountaineer had brought with him from the "up-country" just enough of the atmosphere of adventure and daring to have a romantic effect, and he had won friends quite rapidly. His manners were a shade freer than the conventional "low country" aristocrats affected; but his bearing was proud and his personal appearance extremely agreeable; and then his voice — no one ever heard it without feeling its persuasive influence. As a background for all his claims upon Savannah society, Mr. Ellis came of an old and famous family. His ancestors, both paternal and maternal, had distinguished themselves in colonial times, and in the Floridian, the Mexican and the late wars. They had been a race of office-holders, rich, powerful, hospitable, renowned. Such ante-

cedents held a magical power which would fling wide the social gates of the aristocrats of the low country. The mere matter of his having broken the United States revenue laws was not to be considered against him, especially since the affair had been amicably adjusted. His boldness, cleverness and dashing bravery were set down to his credit. He was a true example of chivalry.

There may have been just a touch of the brigandish in his character, as seen in certain lights and from occasional chance points of view; but this only served to enhance his power by adding the fascination of romance. Given youth, beauty, ancestral grandeur and fine personal address, the one finishing touch that remains is the subtle gift of defiance of law which is said to be always present with genius. The sultry imagination of the South dearly reverences such defiance so long as it is not levelled at the old institutions of aristocracy; and this imagination particularly relishes antinomian tendencies in the line of contempt of Northern rules, amongst which are counted the revenue laws. In some way Mr. Ellis embodied this irrepressible Southern defiance. He looked it, and his past career had accorded with it. On the other hand, he was gentle, sweet-voiced and almost amiable. He had many of the elements of greatness, not the least of which was enthusiasm and perfect self-reliance. His operations in illicit distilling had been on a rather grand scale, and his profits had been correspondingly heavy; but his masterly tact and skill

had been shown to best advantage in his settlement of the whole matter with the revenue officials in such a way as to save his fortune, and his liberty as well. He had come to Savannah with the reputation of a brilliant fellow. In fact, he was everywhere privately discussed, as a hero, his achievements and adventures losing nothing in the course of frequent telling. He was well aware of his prestige, and very quietly he pursued the advantage it gave him. He had determined to turn his energies to strictly legitimate pursuits; but, while nominally a broker in cotton, his thoughts were fixed on large schemes in another channel. He saw the broad field that the South offered for railroad building, especially Southern Georgia and Florida, to which field Savannah held the key. He began at once to study the situation of all the railroads of Florida, and to gather information relative to certain proposed lines. It was not long till he had mastered such knowledge as promised to serve his turn. He planned boldly, but with great care. Before Mr. Roosevelt was aware of any move, this intrepid tyro in his own field had got firm control of three proposed routes, with land grants attached, in Florida, and was negotiating with New York capitalists for placing the bonds, and procuring money and iron for building. It had been so cleverly executed that Mr. Roosevelt was compelled to admire and respect the genius of the man who had originated it. But it called for prompt action. A telegram was sent to Mr. Largely requiring him to

come to Savannah at once. An outline of the dangerous break in the plan they had made at Chicago, caused by this brilliant *coup* of Ellis', was embodied in the despatch. The answer was short, but it meant a good deal :

"I start to-day. Edgar Julian will be with me.

"LARGELY."

Mr. Roosevelt saw at once that Ellis had in him the germ of success, and he viewed him as all the more dangerous on account of his youth and inexperience. Genius is often successful where trained experience would fail ; it is the success of audacity backed by enthusiasm.

The telegram from Mr. Largely was the first intimation received at Roosevelt place of Edgar Julian's return to Chicago. In fact, he had just arrived from New York, and calling at once on Mr. Largely had found the latter quite excited over the despatch from Savannah. To Mr. Largely this opportune return of his lawyer and financial adviser was a great relief. It lifted a heavy responsibility, and gave a mighty impetus to his energy.

Mr. Roosevelt himself felt that a good deal might justly be expected of Julian in the sharp struggle which must soon begin, a struggle which would ultimately involve the ownership of the most valuable railroad in Florida.

Sir Edmond Kane, a distinguished English baronet, and the representative of large London capital, had arrived in New York, and would soon be at Jacksonville with a view to capturing a portion of

the system projected by Messrs. Roosevelt and Largely.

There was no time to be lost. Vigorous action and comprehensive judgment were called for. There must be a combination of forces and interests. It struck Mr. Roosevelt suddenly that his grand schemes were liable to burst at any moment.

Mr. Frank Ellis went right on, once he had started in his railroad operations. The newspapers began to be full of his doings. He was called a Southern Jim Fiske, a young Vanderbilt, and his power and influence increased prodigiously. He had gained the confidence and aid of New York capitalists, and his energy seemed without limit. It was as if a mountain storm had struck the stagnant waters of Savannah's financial circles. The bankers and brokers all looked out to see what it could mean.

Rosalie soon became aware of Mr. Ellis' brilliant movements, though he never mentioned them to her. She read the newspapers, and Colonel Talbot often spoke in high praise of the "young railroad king from the Cherokee hills," who was revolutionizing internal improvements in Florida and Southern Georgia. She could not help feeling a certain pride in Ellis' success, on the score that he was from the "pocket." Of course his success, as yet, consisted of mere movements which pointed out his aims, for there had not been time for anything more. His race had just begun, but his pace was astonishing. Meantime the effect of his rapid op-

erations was immensely exaggerated by the newspapers; some accounts went so far as to place him in undisputed control of all the railroads in Florida.

Rosalie's imagination found food in the idea of this young mountaineer conquering the low country. She was glad to hear Mr. Roosevelt declare that Ellis' operations were all legitimate, and without any color of fraud or deceit. She perfectly understood that the young man had brought down upon himself an amount of public condemnation on account of his moonshine business, and she felt with pride the immediate value of his present high course. In some indefinite way, she had a sense of responsibility for his actions, as if he has been her brother, or other near kinsman. She was not aware that this feeling was an outgrowth of that clannishness which always exists among mountain folk.

"I am proud of your success," she said to him one day, as they sat together in one of the spacious Roosevelt parlors. "I do hope all your great plans will prove practicable."

His dark face flushed a little as he answered, —

"It is so kind of you, Miss Chenier, to wish that. If I can always count on such a feeling from you, I shall succeed in spite of all opposition."

She smiled, and not catching the covert or repressed sentiment of his last sentence, said, —

"You can do that. The business you are now in has the approval of everybody, and —"

"Oh, well, the other business was infamous, but I didn't realize it till it was all over," he quickly interrupted. "You know the war had demoralized us up there in the mountains."

"We were shut out from a knowledge of what was doing in the world," she said. "I did not dream of what a strong current human life can be, till I went up into the North."

"The current might be just as strong here in the South if we would make it so. What's the use of all this retrospection and brooding and despair? Our soil is just as good as ever it was; we have our health, our daylight, our night-time. Is it the right sort of people we lack?"

The rich power of his voice thrilled her as he spoke, and he lifted his head proudly, as if conscious of his strength. In a very tender tone he added, —

"Miss Chenier, I am not going to be a drone and a grumbler. Do you recollect the time I met you up in the dark little dell by the spring above the mill?"

"Yes," she simply said.

He reflected a moment. His face was that of one who ponders a dear and doubtful proposition. Something like a pale heat gathered under the skin of his dark cheeks. He made a slow, soundless, hesitating movement with his lips, as if about to utter some precious and weighty sentence; but he turned and looked through the window, and did not speak.

"You were in an evil mood that day," she presently added.

"Yes, but I had provocation," he quickly replied. "Those Yankees were tracking me as a hunter tracks a wild beast." (Since the war all Northerners are called Yankees in the South.)

"Well, they did not hurt you, at least," she said, smiling archly.

"No, we are quits — they and I; our scores are even." He smiled also, and picking up her banjo, which chanced to be near him, began idly thrumming on its strings. After a moment he passed it to her.

"Play for me," he said; "it will recall the pastoral sweetness of the 'pocket.' It will drive away those unwelcome recollections. Sing the little French song your father used to love."

"About flying away?"

"Yes."

She immediately struck the preliminary notes, and then throwing back her head, as a bird does, began singing. It was that simple song by Madame Ségalas, beginning, —

"Mon chardonneret s'est sauvé,
Et m'a fait songer au voyage." . . .

She gave infinite sweetness to the expression, and there was a charming discord between the light, lingering cadence of the French measure and the sudden blunt notes of the banjo. Her attitude was careless and graceful, the merest trace of infan-

tile abandon in it, suiting perfectly the spirit of the song. When she reached the lines, —

“Viens — je veux cueiller des bluets
Dans tous les blés que le ciel dore,” —

Ellis stole a glance at her face, a soft, dreamy light gathering in his eyes. Her voice was like a call to him from a higher and purer atmosphere; and when she ended with, —

“Et sur toutes les fleurs du globe
J'irai prendre des papillons,” —

he felt as if she had really wandered away, in her white robe of innocence, far beyond his reach. He dared not say to himself that he was her lover. Up in the “pocket” he would have said it. But here, with the ripening change coming over her, with the wisdom of womanhood beginning to gather in her beautiful eyes, he almost feared her. He looked around the great room, his eyes pausing here and there as they encountered objects of rare beauty and costliness. He rapidly contrasted this with the narrow simplicity of the old mill; and he compared the elegantly dressed young lady before him with the flour-dusted lass who used to smile on him from the top of the old stone wall when he brought letters and magazines to the Cheniers up there in the mountain-guarded nook of the “pocket.”

“You have changed a great deal,” he suddenly

said, interrupting her as she began to thrum a pretty fantasy.

"Oh, have I?" she exclaimed, with a little flicker of self-consciousness in her face. "Do I not sing so well as I used to?"

"You sing better. I did not mean that. I had reference to your — your looks."

"It's my clothes," she said, casting a quick, satisfied glance over her simple but beautiful apparel.

"Not altogether — not at all," he responded. "You have learned a great deal, and you have grown more — more — beautiful."

"Have I?" she exclaimed, her eyes recovering their old sincerity, and her voice its childish freedom. "I have always wished to be beautiful."

"You are very, very beautiful," he said in a way which seemed to suppress a world of emotion. It was as if he were saying it from a great distance, and did not expect her to hear it.

Whither their talk might at last have led them, one may no more than surmise. Just then Mr. Roosevelt entered the hall with some one, and a voice that startled Rosalie reached the parlor.

"You shall make my house your home while you are in Savannah, sir," she heard Mr. Roosevelt say in his hearty, hospitable way. "When did you say Mr. Largely will arrive?"

"Within three days at farthest. He had to go by way of Boston and New York," replied Edgar Julian.

"It is Mr. Julian," she exclaimed in a sort of breathless half-whisper.

Ellis wondered at her agitation. Her cheeks had almost lost their color, and she was trembling. She had let the banjo fall upon the carpet at her feet, and sat in an expectant attitude, her lips slightly parted, and her eyes turned upon the doorway.

A few moments later Mr. Roosevelt entered, followed closely by Edgar Julian.

Rosalie went to meet them, holding out her hand to the guest, and smiling radiantly.

Mr. Ellis measured with his eyes the form of the stalwart Northerner, and rose as Mr. Roosevelt turned to introduce them.

The young men were of about the same stature, save that Ellis was the lithier and more graceful.

They shook hands; that was about all.

Ellis withdrew as soon as he could with politeness, feeling something in the atmosphere which oppressed him painfully.

As he walked to his hotel his mind was full of that strange bitter-sweetness which comes of half-formed love and half-developed jealousy. He shook off the mood, however, and fell to pondering some details of his railroad schemes.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAID OF THE MISTRAL.

EDGAR JULIAN arrived at Savannah and was installed as a member of the Roosevelt household a day or two before the time of Mrs. Roosevelt's party. He was given a large room with windows overlooking the little park to the east, and the shady street to the south. He found himself surrounded with curious antique furniture, having claw-feet and heavy carving. Curtains of rare embroidery, old, heavy and richly dull with age; a massive bedstead hung with ancient lace; window-seats of red cedar, neither oiled nor varnished, and still giving forth the fragrance of the wood; quaint oaken chairs; high-hung paintings; panelled walls and ceiling, — everything marked with age and the taste of former generations. But the air of things was not that of the old castles and chateaux he had been visiting in Europe, though it might be impossible to describe the difference. From the beginning he was charmed. The climate, the profuse but quiet hospitality, the dreamy, semi-tropical look of the streets and parks, the splendid skies of night and day, the sharp salt breezes up the river,

and the languid breaths from the inland, the winter-blooming flowers, all conspired to captivate him. But he was no dreamer. He immediately began a searching examination of the situation of his employers' affairs, and found it grave. Ellis had done his work well, and precisely in such a way as to close up the very doorway of their success. Julian could not see any immediate escape. Of course the plans of Messrs. Roosevelt and Largely had been kept profoundly secret, so that Ellis and his New York coadjutors could have had no counter-plan in view; but their operations had effected quite the same thing as if directed to that end. The fact was that Florida had suddenly attracted the eyes of capitalists and land-speculators in both Europe and America. Certain vast draining schemes were beginning to take shape, and their features and probable results to be bruited about. The orange fever, the jute fever, the early-vegetable fever, the Le Conte-pear fever and the pine and cedar lumber fever had started a rush of emigration; this advanced the price of land enormously; the consequence was that the State authorities offered large grants of the public domain as subsidies to induce the building of canals and railways. Many schemes had been projected: some of them had failed, others had fallen into litigation, and the franchises of nearly all of them were of doubtful validity. Out of this sort of chaos Edgar Julian was expected to bring order. For two days he buried himself in Mr. Roosevelt's office amid a heap of books, pamphlets

and documents, plodding slowly, step by step, through the history of previous schemes and litigations.

In the mean time he scarcely more than spoke to Rosalie, who was longing to hear all he could tell her about Provence and le Chateau Chenier.

The evening for the party at the Roosevelt mansion arrived; charming weather with a cloudless sky, and the moon at its full; a breeze from the ocean just cool enough to make open windows a luxury.

The company was not large, between fifty and one hundred guests, but it was an exceptionally brilliant one. The most delightful people of Savannah were there, especially the younger ones, and Edgar Julian found himself deeply interested in studying the manners of those about him, whilst he seemed to give himself over thoroughly to the pleasures of the occasion. Everywhere he heard "sir," and "pardon," and "obligations," or "obliged," as if these words had especial value for Southern people. He saw very grave and courtly young men and very dignified and gracious young ladies; they all seemed ready and fluent talkers, not noisy after the manner of Northern people, but more flexible, quicker with repartee, and not so familiar in their bearing toward each other. They dressed more simply than men and women of society do in the North, and with less adherence to the latest styles. They wore few ornaments. Here and there a ruby or an emerald, a string of

pearls or red, rare amber beads, shone on neck or breast of the younger girls; as for the men, a fob or seal was all. No doubt this simplicity was owing, in some degree, to a lack of money. Julian saw everywhere some slight evidences of conscious effort on the part of the Southerners to treat him precisely as if he were one of them; and from this, more than from any positive evidence, he argued that under the surface a very strong prejudice existed against him. He did not allow the thought to disturb him, however; it seemed the most natural thing in the world for this prejudice to exist. In fact, he felt great surprise that he was tolerated at all. He remembered, with photographic clearness, how, a few years ago, he had come into this city, a young, boisterous, exultant boy-soldier, glorying in the ruin — the track of fire and famine — he had left behind him. Then the houses were all shut and still, the streets deserted, save that here and there a negro shambled along in the shade of the china-trees. Now and then a curtain would be slightly and furtively withdrawn from a window, and a pale woman's face would appear, to shrink away again in horror of the sight of blue-coated soldiers in those streets.

The Roosevelt mansion was not so brilliantly lighted as houses in the North usually are upon such an occasion, and consequently a dull glow seemed to issue out of the old damask which was looped back from the mullioned windows; the scarlet sofas and divans of one room seemed to

soften the blue carpet and blue satin chairs on another; the massive gilt picture and mirror frames, the former hung much higher than the line, contrasted finely with the rich oak panelling of the walls grown dark with age; the chandeliers were brass, heavy, and of classical design, burning candles instead of gas or oil. The carpets were Oriental, the patterns large and showy, so much despised now; in fact, a breath of latter-day æstheticism had never blown through those rooms. Almost every article of the furniture had been in place for three quarters of a century or more, as the house and all it contained, save *bric-à-brac*, the grand piano and the best pictures, had descended to Mr. Roosevelt from his father, and dated back to a period closely following the colonial revolution. There was no evidence anywhere of effort towards artistic combinations of colors and forms; and yet the effect was restful. Julian passed from room to room in the course of the evening, finding himself once in the conservatory where a wilderness of tropical plants and trees were kept in a state of luxuriant confusion. Here he came upon Ellis and Rosalie Chénier, standing under a palm spray by a noisy little fountain. They were engaged in earnest conversation. He turned away and left them; but not before a swift pang had cut through his heart. How divinely sweet she looked standing there before that dark fellow, her rare face upturned to his! She wore a dress of some rich, clinging blue stuff that followed the outlines of her form; there was

old lace about her throat, and she wore pearls in her pale gold hair ; a single great ruby, the gift of Aunt Marguerite, shone like a big drop of red wine on the fair space at her throat.

The small company was almost lost in so large a house, and the excellent music, to which some were dancing, seemed to linger and loiter in the more distant rooms. Some elderly gentlemen were promenading on the long veranda, smoking and discussing politics, and a faint hint of havanas crept throughout the house.

In all the rooms flowers had been profusely used, and in the grand hall the stairway-railing had been beautifully festooned with a blending of long moss and many-hued garlands of tropical blooms. From almost any stand-point the eye might glance from room to room down long perspectives of subdued splendor. Knots of young girls, simply dressed, added their bouquet-like colors and contrasts to the effect of the bits of statuary and vases of dull cacti grouped here and there.

Whilst the supper was elegant and rich, it had nothing of the grand display of gold and silver so often seen in New York. Julian noticed that there was no polite scrambling around the board, no crush, no unseemly noise. The talking was animated, and mirth rippled as freely and easily as the gusts of air that stole through the dining-hall ; but no one person seemed to attract any especial attention by a louder voice or a greater effort than the rest. The wines were old and fragrant. Ju-

lian heard Mr. Roosevelt say that he had walled this wine up in a certain part of his cellar when he had become convinced that Sherman's army was coming, and thus had saved it.

Mrs. Roosevelt was a charming hostess, easy, affable, not seeking homage, as busy among her guests, and quite as unassuming, as a bee among flowers. She took great pains to introduce Julian, and always with some politely elusive suggestion of his distinguished character.

Few married women were present, and most of them were of the younger class, stately and reserved, as became Southern matrons, but bright and interesting on occasion.

Toward the close of the evening, Edgar Julian found Rosalie disengaged, and offered her his arm.

"Won't you take a turn with me?" he said, in a low tone; "all your guests seem happily fixed just now, and I may not have so good a chance to talk with you again soon. I am off for Florida to-morrow."

"So soon?" she exclaimed, taking his arm; "but you will not be gone long; you will return —"

"I cannot speak with certainty. I shall have to go to Jacksonville and Tallahassee, and then away down through the wilderness to Ocala and Tampa. I may be gone a month."

He enunciated the word month as if it had been century or æon.

"I should think you would enjoy that trip. I

have always imagined I should like Florida," she said.

"But I have been travelling so much, and so rapidly," he replied, carelessly taking from a table, as they passed it, a spray of heliotrope.

"And you have not told me what you saw," she quickly said. "I do so much want to hear more about our old chateau in Provence. I call it ours," she added, looking up and smiling archly, "because I am so far away that the true owner cannot be injured by the assumption of title; and then papa has been fastening the fancy in my head ever since my first recollections."

"It ought to be a very pleasant fancy. I was charmed with Provence," he said, with something like evasiveness in his tone; "but one would not care to live there; it is all so different from what one sees and feels and reveres in America. Life in Provence is good for fancy to feed on, and for stuff out of which to build romance; but it is not conducive to earnest thought and worthy effort towards great achievements."

"But what was our old chateau like?" she demanded; "did you fetch any souvenir from its ruins?"

"Yes," he replied, "I brought quite a number. You shall examine them some day. One, in particular, will, if I mistake not, affect you very strangely when you see it."

"Oh, what is it?" she cried, in her excitement leaning heavily on his arm and gazing eagerly up into his face.

"It is something very beautiful," he responded ;
"I don't believe I ought to forestall or weaken your surprise by any attempt at description ; and besides, I wish to see if you will adopt my view when you have seen the — the — well, let's call it the *Chenier Souvenir*."

"You have set my heart to fluttering," she naïvely said, carrying her free hand to her breast.

"Mine is disturbed too," he replied.

"It's really exciting, isn't it?" she went on, not dreaming of what his words were meant to convey.

"While I think of it," he said, changing his tone, "is Rosalie a name that runs back in your family?"

"It was my father's grandmother's name ; it may date much farther up the line," she replied ; "papa says it is a Chenier name. But why do you ask?"

"The name is common in France ; I heard it often while I was there, and Chenier also. I met one Chenier who was a baron, and another who was a wooden-shod laborer in the vineyards."

"But the souvenir?"

"Ah, yes, I shall show you that when I can. It is among my traps at Chicago. I did not have time to unpack, you know ; I was rushed off down here without even a breathing-space. I have written to have a lot of things forwarded, and the souvenir is included. It must remain a profound and beautiful mystery until it arrives."

"I can't bear mysteries and waiting," she ex-

claimed with real vehemence; "I shall lose all interest unless you tell me now."

He stopped and looked down into her sweet gray-brown eyes; he thought he saw repressed tears in them. They were wholly the eyes of a child now. Her lips were red as cherries.

"It is a small gold cross with the letters R.C. on it," he said, with a promptness that almost amounted to bluntness; "it is very beautiful."

"Oh, and where did you get it?" she exclaimed.

"At the Chateau Chenier. A peasant who lives there dug it up in the garden. I paid an enormous price for it. The R.C. must stand for Rosalie Chenier, you know."

"How strange!" she murmured in a musing way, with her eyes cast down. "Papa has the story of that cross in manuscript, written in Provençal. It is a beautiful legend, called 'The Maid of the Mistral.'"

Julian smiled at her simple faith, but he would not have clouded it for the world. A great love for her had fastened itself upon him; it was struggling for expression, and yet he felt sure he ought not to speak. She seemed too much a child to have the fire of his passion revealed to her, — it might destroy her as a flame would destroy a flower.

They had stopped at a broad window looking south. The moon was near the zenith; it poured a slanting current of white light in upon them; the cool breeze came in too, and tossed the floss gold curls on Rosalie's forehead.

"Was the 'Maid of the Mistral' a love-story?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, and so sweet! Alphonse, the knight, was so brave, and Rosalie, the Maid of the Mistral, was warm and true and good, and they loved each other so dearly. You know the mistral is a wind in Provence; the Maid would sit upon the castle wall when the mistral blew, and play her lute and sing, and her lover would hear her, no matter where he was, because the mistral would take her song and the lute-chords and bear them to him. She gave him the cross when he went away to fight for his king, and he wore it on his heart through the far East. Whenever he would hear her singing and playing the lute he would kiss the cross, and when she had finished she would kiss the ruby ring he had given her. I cannot tell you all his adventures; but at last he returned, and they were married on the castle wall while the mistral was blowing."

"Very sweet," he said, "all those old, old stories are — shall I tell you one?"

The blood had suddenly flowed in upon his heart; his face was pale, and his voice was low and husky.

She looked up quickly, as if to confirm a thought, and a sudden flush spread over her face; her eyes fell at once. His passion had betrayed him.

"I am neglecting my guests," she tremblingly exclaimed; "see, some of them are going. You must excuse me — I must be polite."

She left him with his story all untold. He went to his room, and sat down in a window, trembling with sweet excitement. This was his first love experience.

The grand abysm of heaven was burning with moon and stars as he gazed up into its almost purple depths. A radiance fell upon the old city, like nothing he had ever seen in Northern nights. Below him the broad palmetto leaves waved and rustled; the long pendent strands of gray moss streamed down the gentle breeze. He heard the puffing of a distant steamer coming up the river. He went to bed, and dreamed that he and Rosalie were married on the wall of Chenier castle while the mistral was blowing!

CHAPTER XVI.

MANY MEN OF MANY MINDS.

MR. LARGEY arrived from New York on the morning following the Roosevelt party, and Julian immediately left for Jacksonville, on the same train with Ellis, who was going to Tallahassee.

These young men politely avoided each other. Julian had found out all the facts of Ellis' career, and with a lawyer's contempt for criminals, could not hide his aversion. As for Ellis, he was too busy with his schemes to give much thought to anything else; nor did he dream that Julian contemplated any work of circumvention. The lawyer was moving with great caution and secrecy.

It must not be thought that any dishonorable advantage was desired by either Mr. Roosevelt or Edgar Julian. Mere tricks and technical turns, having no substantial basis of merit, are far less frequent in business life than uninformed persons are apt to suppose. Lawyers, as a class, stick closer to the clearly defined rules of honesty than any other class of business men. They demand the law for their clients, with all the advantages

included; but instances of "legalized robbery" occur in respectable courts at very wide intervals. There is about railroad operations, however, as in military movements, a constant and necessary manœuvring for position, which at times becomes in the last degree exciting, and the struggles between rival corporations often take on the appearance of mere battles for the spoils. At the foundation, however, is the law of the land, with all the assistance that long-established chancery rules can afford, upon which success rests. This campaigning of railroad corporations has come to be a marked feature of American affairs; its history would be interesting and instructive; the perspective power of a few years will disclose the colossal influence exerted by this clash of corporate interests.

The experience and success of Edgar Julian in the management of a number of most complicated and important railroad suits affecting the vast commercial and manufacturing interests of Chicago, had given him wealth, prestige and unbounded self-reliance. His name was at the head of the list of Western railroad lawyers, and he deserved the distinction. But even the profoundest and shrewdest of men sometimes find a business skein, very simple in appearance, which refuses to be unravelled. Such an one was the Floridian railroad tangle.

Julian went to Jacksonville; Ellis went to Tallahassee. The former, with all his acumen and experience, found himself at fault; the latter, not

knowing the difficultness of his task, went straight to success.

Ellis had made fast friends of all the State officials and through them had forwarded his interests in a hundred desirable ways. He went among the leading men of various towns and neighborhoods, and by force of personal magnetism, a charming voice and taking manners, built up a following that served his turn where money and mere business knowledge would have failed.

Julian was not a little surprised to find that even in Jacksonville Ellis' name was upon the lips of all the pushing capitalists and land-traders. At Ocala and Tampa he made the same discovery. From Gainseville, in the heart of the orange groves, he wrote to Mr. Largely. 'In the letter was the following very striking sentence: —

“We shall have to give everything up or make terms with this man Ellis.”

One day Ellis read in a Jacksonville daily newspaper a paragraph that set him to thinking as he had never thought before. It disclosed to his quick understanding the whole of Edgar Julian's mission to Savannah and Florida. He read and reread this pregnant statement: “Mr. Edgar Julian, a distinguished railway attorney of Chicago, is in the city, stopping at the Duval House. It is understood that he represents some Chicago capitalists in connection with Mr. Roosevelt of Savannah, and that he is here with a view to making it lively for those who expect to control the lines into the orange

region. Our friend Col. Frank Ellis would do well to keep a weather eye out for the bearings of this new craft."

Mr. Largely telegraphed to Julian: "Make no terms. We'll crush him. He's got no backing."

A few days later Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Largely went to Jacksonville, arriving on the same day that brought Sir Edmond Kane and his party.

The presence of such a number of railway magnates, including a member of the British parliament and a German baron, was blazoned forth to the world by the clever newspapers of the city.

Edgar Julian, Mr. Largely and Mr. Roosevelt had a meeting and conference with Sir Edmond Kane and the Baron Wertheimer, but no arrangement was reached. Then Mr. Ellis appeared and sought an interview with the distinguished foreigners. They listened to his eloquent description of his schemes, their bearing upon the future development of Florida, and the rich returns that capital invested therein might soon expect. He had the whole story at his tongue's end; to listen was to believe and trust. His voice was as seductive as the South itself. It had all the warmth and sweetness, all the promise of fruit, all the breezy freshness and fragrance of the climate; but it also had the deceptions, the illusions, the snares.

No sooner had he appeared in the city than the daily papers were full of flattering notices; the leading citizens called upon him; attention was withdrawn from the distinguished foreigners.

"Are you going to capitulate to this smooth-tongued tyro?" exclaimed Mr. Largely, half-growling half-taunting, as he and Julian stood on an upper veranda of their hotel and saw Sir Edmond Kane, the Baron Wertheimer and Mr. Ellis drive away together in a carriage.

Julian did not answer immediately. The question had struck him like a blow in the face.

"He's no railroad man," continued Largely, shrugging his stout shoulders and laying his hand heavily on the young man's arm; "you can see that at a glance; and yet, I suppose, the most brilliant lawyer in the country will go down before him."

Julian smiled grimly. He despised the spirit of Largely's language; it humiliated him to think that any man would attempt to goad him to greater effort by taunts and by suggestions meant to excite a mean personal ambition; and yet he felt the humiliation of defeat deep in the very core of his consciousness.

"If you refer to me when you speak of the most brilliant lawyer in the country, I can say that I shall not go down before Mr. Ellis. At present he seems legally in possession of certain rights and franchises, stocks, bonds, certificates of landed donations, and so on, of which he cannot be dispossessed —"

"That is not the point," interposed Largely, lifting his calculating eyes to Julian's clouded face. "It is not a matter of law, it is a question of personal influence. He has captured these foreigners."

"Yes, he is lying to them in the most approved Southern fashion. He is making them believe that the pine flats below here are the richest prizes in the world, and he has thoroughly convinced Dixon of Philadelphia that the bottom of Lake Okechobee is more valuable than a gold-mine."

"He is using his gifts to some purpose, then," brutally replied Largely.

"Yes, to some purpose," sneered Julian.

"And what do *you* think of this draining and trans-peninsular canal scheme that Ellis is talking of?" inquired Largely in a more earnest tone.

"Frankly, there may be a great deal in it, though I doubt it. But all the same, it will serve Ellis a grand turn. It gives his faculty for charming exaggeration the fullest field for action."

"You rate Ellis too low, I fear," Mr. Largely quietly remarked.

"No, you mistake me. I would not detract from his genuine genius; but you will soon discover, what is already demonstrated to me, that he is utterly untruthful and unscrupulous. He is a bold, gifted, illy trained adventurer."

"But his lack of training seems not to have discovered itself in his operations down here," Largely answered.

Julian made an impatient gesture, as if to shake off a disagreeable feeling.

"In your telegram to me the other day, I think you spoke of crushing him, or something of the sort," he presently remarked.

Largely laughed aloud ; then —

“ At that distance it seemed easy,” he generously replied ; “ but upon a nearer inspection I see some difficulty.”

It was Julian’s turn to laugh. He had felt the difficulty all the time.

“ One thing troubles me strangely,” he said, frowning a little and biting at his mustache ; “ this climate, or something else, seems to check my power to think clearly. I find that, since I have come to Jacksonville, it requires an effort to concentrate my mind.”

He did not dream that Rosalie Chenier, with her sweet gray eyes and straw-gold hair, her charming ways, and her low, thrilling voice, was the disturbing force. This thing of being in love was a new sensation ; as yet he had not thoroughly recognized its existence, much less its power.

“ You are eating too many oranges and drinking too much of this tart scuppernong,” said Largely, biting off the end of a cigar and firing a match. “ Brandy is better, — drink brandy, and let oranges severely alone for a day or two, and you’ll be all right. Every time I’ve seen you lately you’ve been sucking one of these half-ripe oranges.”

In fact, Julian had just tossed the empty rind of one into the street below. Most Northern persons feel it their duty while in the South to eat all the oranges they see.

“ Smoke too much for one of *your* make-up, too, I guess,” continued Largely, as Julian also lighted

a very strong cigar. "Now I'm different. Ten or twelve a day don't hurt me,—keep my mind active."

"It will need to be active for a time now, or I am at fault," replied Julian. "Ellis and these foreigners are going to give us our hands full of trouble."

"Aren't you getting a'most too conscientious for a first-class railroad lawyer, Julian?" Largely put this question bluntly with his cigar turned up until it stood almost parallel with his nose.

"Perhaps."

"I believe it."

"You know the remedy?"

"No."

"Get you a lawyer who is not too conscientious."

"Oh, the deuce! Now, seriously, Julian, I've a plan which I believe would knock these fellows higher than a kite if properly carried out."

"Your plan, I presume, is one not meant for a tender conscience to direct," suggested Julian.

Largely winced and laughed.

"It would be a deadener, all the same," he replied. "Success is what we came down here for."

At this point Mr. Roosevelt joined them, his semi-Jewish face wearing a look of chagrin. He put his hand on Largely's heavy shoulder and said,—

"It looks as if we should have to makè terms with those parties."

"Never in this world!" exclaimed Largely, his face growing scarlet. "I'll spend a million first! Damned if they shall force me!"

"Well, it is time for us to move in some way. I see no chance, however, to oust Ellis honorably," added Mr. Roosevelt.

"Of course you don't want to oust him by any dishonorable means?" said Julian.

"Sir!"

"Pardon, I did not mean offence; of course I *know* you do not wish any doubtful —"

"No, sir! The man who would do a dishonest thing in *one* way would do it in *every* way," exclaimed Mr. Roosevelt.

Julian could not help glancing sharply at Mr. Largely; but that doughty millionaire had veiled his face in a most impenetrable air of abstraction; he did not seem aware of what had just been said.

Mr. Roosevelt made a few turns back and forth on a space of the veranda; he was slowly letting a truth in upon his mind, which was that Southern people are to be reached most easily and surely through their imaginations. Of course he had always known this, but had scarcely realized its force until now. Hitherto his plans had operated without difficulty, moved by the power of his will and his money. He had never been a wrecker, or a schemer to rob others of their property. He had never watered stocks or used fraudulent means to enhance the apparent value of bonds. His gains in railroad property had been accumulated mostly by

taking advantage of the reaction in internal improvements in the South, which began with the first good cotton crop after the close of the war. Now he was facing his first wave of genuine opposition, and with it came the perfect consciousness that he must either let this wave pass over and beyond him, or give no heed to the admonitions of a high sense of honor and truth.

In the South there are two extremes of character most noticeable, — the extreme of ostentatious high-mindedness and purity, and the extreme of unscrupulous deceit and dishonor veiled behind the most enthusiastic eloquence and the most chivalric bearing. Mr. Roosevelt belonged to the first class. He would sooner die with some honorable *éclat* than have a hint of disgrace attached to his name.

Edgar Julian was a strong instance of the Northern conscience. His convictions had all the purity and something of the frigid quality of ice. He balanced right and wrong with the *sang-froid* of a shopman weighing his wares. Right was the standard, the gold, the measure of values.

Mr. Largely represented the money-making North, earnest, conscienceless, godless, but honest by the gauge of Wall street or the Chicago Board of Trade honesty. He would kill a railroad and devour it, just as a Chicago pig-sticker would sacrifice a pig for a like purpose. When he set his financial gill-net, all was fish that got caught therein. When he heard of some poor fellow getting tangled and choked, he lighted a cigar and said, "He

ought to have had better luck ; let him bite again !” He had come up and out from the people, the herd, by beating and banging right and left. He had made his millions by getting other men’s money. His motto was, “ Fight to win, and you’re sure to whip,” — a motto, it will be observed, that does not qualify the method of fighting. His was a strong head. A big will-power; a dogged determination, a heavy reserve of available executive energy, served him instead of learning ; and with it all was blended a fox-like cunning. He presently turned to Julian, and in a tone of cool inquiry said, —

“ What is the legal result if one railroad corporation consolidates with another, and the two take a new name as a new corporation ? ”

“ There would be a merging of the corporate existence of both original bodies into the new body,” replied Julian.

“ I know that ; but what would become of lands and other subsidies granted to the two original corporations, upon condition that their roads were to be built within a certain time ? ”

“ It would depend much upon the original stipulations.”

“ Well, to put the case exactly, suppose that certain private persons have granted the right of way and large landed donations to a railroad corporation, incorporated under a certain name and having a certain line, the said right of way and donations being granted under the express contract

that said corporation is to build over a certain line within a specified time. Then further, suppose that said corporation, after getting a deed to said landed donations and right of way, proceeds to merge its corporate existence in that of another corporation, and takes a new name and commences to build over a line different from that specified in the contract: what is the legal remedy?"

"I doubt if there is any," said Julian; "but equity might afford relief."

"Well, the equitable remedy, then?" inquired Largely.

"Perpetual injunction, perhaps."

"Would a court enjoin the further building of the road?"

"It might if irreparable injury were threatened to the grantors of the donations and rights of way."

Mr. Largely turned upon his heel, walked to the veranda railing and leaned over, resting his elbows on the top. His air was careless and not in the least indicative of thought; but Julian well knew that he was brooding some merciless *coup*. He always had that sort of an air about him when he was contemplating the wrecking of a railroad. After a while he turned again to Julian and said, —

"Come to my room and write me a bill, a bond, and an affidavit for a restraining order."

He went at once to his room, followed by the mystified lawyer.

"Now make these papers water-tight," he added ;

"leave names and dates blank so that they can be inserted to suit any case."

Julian spent the rest of the day preparing most elaborate papers of the kind desired. After he had finished he turned to Largely and said, —

"May I ask what in the world you want these for?" tapping the folded documents.

"I have no definite need for them just at this moment," was the evasive reply; "but I don't know how soon I may put them to work."

Julian did not pursue the matter further. He rose to go.

"Julian," said Largely, his voice cutting dully through the air, "you don't care to help wreck three or four promising railroad companies, I reckon?"

"No, I should not know how to begin. If you will excuse me —"

"You are excused," interrupted Largely, dryly, "you and Roosevelt both. You are too sentimental for my purposes. I guess I can manage this little affair alone."

Next day, without disclosing his plan to either Julian or Mr. Roosevelt, Largely was for several hours in close consultation with a firm of able Jacksonville attorneys.

He returned to the hotel and joined Mr. Roosevelt and Julian at supper. He was now in excellent spirits. He joked freely and laughed a good deal.

"I feel as though something was going to happen," he said, "and not happen to me, at that."

CHAPTER XVII.

BY MOONLIGHT.

WHEN Mr. Roosevelt was called away to Jacksonville Aunt Marguerite proposed to Rosalie that they also go ; but the young girl from the mountains was too much in love with her grand home and the charming old city to care for any further roaming. The beautiful friendship had perfected itself between her and Miss Fain ; very few days passed that they were not together for some hours of confidential girl-talk. They often went on fair afternoons to stroll in the Forsyth park or along the sweet dusky aisles of Bull street. Rosalie never tired of those long straight lines of trees, those high-walled courts and ancient houses, the knotty fig-clumps, and columnar, sunny palmettoes. She liked the deep perspectives that every turn in the streets unveiled. She lingered at certain points where beyond the limit of the city the streets fell into white, glimmering country lanes, hedged on either hand with wild tangles of trees, moss and vines. She found such a vast contrast between the almost Arcadian features of this typical Southern city, sunken in foliage and steeped in fragrance,

and the glaring, crashing, surging streets of New York and Chicago.

Aunt Marguerite often took these girl-friends on long drives in her landau, to the many beautiful suburban places having historic and romantic legends to enhance their interest. There were the Jasper Spring, and George Whitfield's celebrated orphan-home, Bethesda, — spots sacred to the memory of deeds rather than men. One has almost forgotten that Georgia, lately the leading rebel State, was among the immortal thirteen, until one starts at the mention of Walton, Jasper, Sergeant Newton, James Habersham, Col. John White, and a long list of Georgians, mostly connected in some way with Savannah, the old city of Oglethorpe. Then one begins to recall D'Estaing and the siege, and many a notable fact of early Georgia history, slowly getting back to remember that even New England has little advantage of the old Empire State of the South.

Rosalie found no resemblance between the people here and those in the Cherokee hills; even the poor "crackers" and negroes were of a quite different class from the mountaineer peasantry of the up-country. She could scarcely understand the gibberish of the Savannah negroes at all, and she noted the peculiar bowing of the men's legs and the curious out-turning of the feet of the wenches who hoed in the garden plats. Everywhere, and by almost every object that met her eyes, she was reminded of the fact that she was in a region wholly South-

ern and fervid. Day by day and week by week her homesickness had lessened, and her delight in the new life had deepened apace. She wrote frequent and long letters to her dear ones at the mill, but her longing for the dripping sound of the cool old wheel at rest, or its foaming noise when turning, had nearly ceased to be a part of her beginnings and postscripts.

Colonel Talbot became a frequent visitor at Roosevelt place, and his marked attentions to Rosalie might have attracted some notice from one less wrapped up in the young girl's happiness than Aunt Marguerite. As it was, however, almost every day saw him spend at least an hour in her company. He was an accomplished guitarist, and they often played together and sang those simple songs like "Last Rose of Summer," "Come where my Love Lies Dreaming," and "Within a mile of Edinburgh Town." Her voice possessed the subtle charm that goes with perfect purity and faultless *timbre*; it had a smack of racy wildness in it, as if the influence of the mountain brooks and winds lingered with it. Colonel Talbot was fascinated. He did not dream of being in love with her. He felt perfectly secure, knowing that he should marry Miss Fain within a few months; but he was perfectly conscious, all the same, that a sweet power was drawing him deeper and deeper into the rosy atmosphere that surrounded this dear mysterious mountain maid.

One evening, a short time after Edgar Julian's

departure for Jacksonville, Rosalie sat alone on the Roosevelt veranda, lightly thrumming on her banjo. She was in an idle mood, pleasing her imagination with building chateaux in Provence and singing broken snatches from one of the little French songs her father had taught her :

“ La mandore, la mandore !
Ma voix est naïve, et, jeune encore,
Je pince tra-la de la mandore,
Tra-la, tra-la, de la mandore ! ”

Some such stanza as this she was warbling airily when Colonel Talbot's baritone joined in. He had come through the little side gate and up the steps without attracting her attention.

She turned towards him, smiling sweetly, rising to greet him, still singing. When they were seated he begged her to go over the almost meaningless little ditty again. Their voices rose together in strange accord, and seemed to go away side by side up into the realms of moonlight. She felt the touch of strength his presence gave to the scene, and it was a very pleasant and satisfying thing to sit there beside him. Half-child as she was, she had become aware that he always descended from his usual stiff dignity of manner when in her company ; and now to hear him gayly joining in this foolish little song was something gratifying, as though she had drawn him down to her own simple level of life. He was not so strong in his personality as Edgar Julian, nor so fascinating in conver-

sation as Frank Ellis; but he was more flexible and responsive to the immediate influence of his surroundings, — more a man of society. It delighted Rosalie to have him readily falling into her moods and sharing her whims. She liked him all the more because she knew he was Miss Fain's lover. In her simplicity she felt that the man who was going to marry her best friend was in a position to make him quite dear to her.

Colonel Talbot was leaning his head close to hers as they sang. They were both unaware that a tall dark man had stopped in the street, just beyond the court-yard wall, and was looking and listening through the gate.

“ La mandore, la mandore,
J'etends son tintement sonore.”

The man clutched a slat of the gate as if to rend it, then turned and walked away with his very blood on fire. Two voices flowing parallel followed him with —

“ Je pince tra-la de la mandore,
Tra-la, tra-la, de la mandore !”

Colonel Talbot, as the singing came to an end, took the banjo from Rosalie and said, —

“ Let us go walking, — this splendid moonlight makes an enchanted world of the city. I want to show you the loveliest spot under the sky.”

“ I shall have to ask Aunt Marguerite first,” she

answered. "If she says I may go, I shall be glad to take the turn. I have been in-doors all day."

She went to seek Mrs. Roosevelt, leaving the young man on the veranda toying with the banjo, and humming "*La Mandore*." When she returned she had a light blue scarf over her head, and her face beamed the more witchingly from the contrast. A few bright locks of her hair curled over her broad forehead.

"We are not going serenading," she said, taking the banjo and putting it on a chair; "aunt says I may not be gone longer than a half-hour."

He looked down over her fine, strong figure with the satisfied air of one who contemplates "a thing of beauty," which might be "a joy forever;" then slipping her hand under his arm he led her forth into the glory of the semi-tropical night. There were many carriages in the streets, for the winter tourists from the North had begun their annual flight to Florida, stopping on their way for a few days in the restful, breezy, shady old city; but the wheels made little noise rolling in the deep grayish sand, and the gay loads of pleasure-seekers and sight-seers drew past like a part of the night's dreamy conjurations. Rosalie hung lightly on Colonel Talbot's arm, feeling a deep sense of security, mingled with a girlish consciousness of the romantic possibilities of the situation. It must be remembered that she was fresh from the reading of stories full of knights and troubadours, of princes in disguise, and of lady-loves for whom men gladly

faced death. She was not of the same century with your brisk and tricky Northern girl, who is full of social philosophy and the latest method of flirtation. If she dreamed of a lover, she made him, in some sort, a champion *sans peur, et sans reproche*, — never a millionaire, or a polo-player, or a yacht-commodore, or a leader of a fashionable club. She would marry him who would win her by personal prowess directed by the fervor of romantic love; his nature must be lofty and his aims pure; he must be a Launcelot in bravery, a Bayard in honor. Many young girls have such a dream; but with Rosalie it was a hereditament, a part of her nature's fibre.

"This is finer than your mountains," said Talbot, making a motion with his cane. They had come to the middle of a little ornamental square at the intersection of two streets, and were looking down a broad vista between rows of grand trees. The moonlight and shade flecked the ground fantastically as far as the eye could reach; the stately houses on either hand were half-buried in foliage; a tender gloom lurked amid the moss-hung boughs of the live-oaks and china-trees; the sky overhead was thinly sprinkled with stars, the moon hung over in the east, and the breeze seemed to blow right out of its great white face.

"It is different, and fine; but not finer than the mountains," she replied. "You should see those foot-hills in autumn, when the sweet-gum trees are in their scarlet leafage; and the fragrance of the

gum-balsam, the liquid-amber,—you will never find anything so soothing and delightful.”

“Yes; but wait till the spring begins here, and the mocking-birds find their voices. Do you have mocking-birds in the hill-country?”

“Not many; but the brown thrush, the cat-bird and the cardinal grosbeak all sing throughout the season. Some mornings the very woods stir with music and the wind is a stream of song.”

Talbot nestled her arm closer to his side. They now and then passed low stoops where groups of people were enjoying the balmy breeze and the moonlight. He felt a keen satisfaction in thus having this fresh young girl all to himself, and it thrilled him to feel her light touch on his arm.

“But where is that lovely scene you were going to show me?” she demanded, just as they met a tall man, who, with a wide-brimmed hat slouched over his face, was leisurely strolling in a direction opposite to theirs.

“Why, that—that was Mr. Ellis, was it not?” she added almost in a whisper.

“I believe it was,” he replied; “I could not see his face.”

“But I thought he was in Jacksonville,” she murmured.

He felt her arm quiver a little, and her voice was disturbed, as if with a pleasurable emotion. He felt a responsive pang leap through his own breast at the thought of any man save himself causing that tender flutter.

"We shall reach the spot I spoke of in a few moments now," he said, unconsciously quickening his pace and drawing her rapidly along.

At length they came to where a street had been temporarily walled across to prevent travel in it during the erection of some public improvement. To the left an old brick residence half-covered with vines rose heavily against the sky. The court-yard wall had been broken, giving a view of the space within, where three groups of palms and an old, old fig-tree shaded a small summer-house, whose conical roof and fluted pillars were garlanded with ivy. Here Talbot paused, finding their further progress barred by the wall across the street.

"I suppose we shall have to forego the pleasure I promised," he said; "it would be a long way around."

"I think we might better go back, anyway," said R salie; "the half-hour is already quite gone, I fear."

"Oh, no," exclaimed Talbot, "it is impossible. We haven't been ten minutes coming." He looked at his watch, holding it in a spot of moonlight.

Rosalie had turned about, and he could do nothing more than turn also. They were both quite surprised to find that the man they had supposed to be Ellis had evidently followed them. He was standing, or rather he was in the act of turning away, not fifty feet from them.

Talbot and Rosalie looked at each other inquiringly as Ellis, if it was he, walked diagonally across the street at a rapid pace, soon hiding himself among the trees of a little park.

"Surely that was not Ellis!" said Talbot in a half-suppressed voice; "he would not act so strangely."

"Let us return at once," said Rosalie with a shudder. A sudden sense of danger had almost overpowered her.

"Never fear," said Colonel Talbot; "no doubt the man means no harm; but if he were a robber he would not attempt anything in this part of the city."

She clung more closely now, and in a shaking voice urged him to take her home quickly. He thought her excitement the mere timidity of a young girl. If he had known all that she knew he would not have wondered at her emotion.

On their way back to the Roosevelt mansion they talked little. Rosalie hung heavily on his arm. When they reached the little gate he opened it; she passed through, and suddenly turning faced him in great excitement.

"Watch as you go home," she exclaimed, in a sharp whisper; "he will kill you if he gets the chance." Her excitement and solicitude thrilled him strangely.

"Oh, there's no danger," he replied, in a voice hoarse and unsteady. He took one of her outstretched hands and kissed it in a sudden transport

of passion. In a second he was overwhelmed with the foolishness and unpardonable boldness of the act.

Rosalie became like stone. Her voice was cold as steel when she said, —

“Colonel Talbot, you had no right to do that, sir! you —”

“Rosalie — Miss Chenier — pardon me, I beg of you; I —”

“No, there was no excuse.”

She turned abruptly and walked to the steps of the house. He shut the gate, dazed, bewildered, chagrined, and went his way. He had not taken ten paces when he heard the click of the gate-latch, and then Rosalie called, in a low, thin voice, “Colonel Talbot!”

“Here,” he answered, turning about.

“Do not forget to be careful. There is great danger.”

He walked swiftly back to the gate; but she had run into the house, and the great door had closed before he could speak.

Now and then a man of excellent intellect is taken unaware by some silly impulse and is driven to do an inexplicable act. Talbot would now have given his fortune to be able to expunge that one indiscretion.

He took hold of the gate and was half-inclined to go into the house. He did not see how he could bear to have Rosalie think him guilty of an unjustifiable act against her. He would have sworn

to her upon his Southern honor, if he could have got her to listen, that he had done it on a sudden rush of unpremeditated desire, innocently and without intent. Conscience always takes this turn, its most powerful admonitions are after the fact. If it would labor as hard to prevent one's misdemeanors as it does to make one wholly wretched when it is forever too late, how much trouble it might prevent! To Colonel Talbot everything was very plain, now that the evil was done. He saw the path by which he had approached the danger. It was the spiral course of the moth about the fire. He had been a great fool. He hated himself for it. To think that he had been playing false to himself and to the girl he loved and was going to marry, made the blood burn in his veins. He saw a great smirch on his honor,—a bitter thing for a Southern knight to contemplate.

He slowly strode towards his home, his keen regret driving out of his mind Rosalie's words of warning. Suddenly a man confronted him. He stopped short.

"Is that you, Colonel Talbot?" said a voice, deep and husky, that he did not recognize.

"Yes, sir: what do you want?" he responded, gripping his cane and making ready to defend himself.

The figure moved, passing across a fleck of moonlight. Talbot saw the face and instantly remembered it. The next moment something struck him on the head, a dull, heavy blow, and he

fell upon the ground still and senseless. The figure stooped over him and hurriedly but coolly searched his pockets, until a paper was found, which it carefully examined, as if to be sure of its identity, then rapidly walked away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHADOW OF EVIL.

WHEN Rosalie ran into the house from the gate after warning Colonel Talbot the second time, she went directly up to her own room and locked herself in. Her heart was throbbing rapidly and her breathing was difficult. A sense of humiliation oppressed her. Her hand burned where the passionate touch of Talbot's lips had left its effect, more searing, as she imagined, than the touch of fire. How could he dare to do such a thing! Her face blazed with indignation and shame. He was Mildred Fain's lover, too! Then she drooped her fine young head as she wondered if she had given him any right to think himself encouraged—to think himself safe in doing such an act. A stronger thought asserted itself, however, and she pressed her hands against her temples as if to deaden the strain of the internal pressure. She was recalling the conversation she had with Ellis in the conservatory on the evening of the party. It will be remembered that Julian saw them thus engaged, and left them there.

“You remember what you told me in the path

to the spring above the mill?" Ellis had said, his voice rich with a sudden feeling.

"Yes, I believe I do," she hesitatingly replied.

"Are you not *certain* you do?" he insisted, bending over her until his long dark mustache almost touched her golden ringlets. "*I remember every word.*"

"What did I say?" she demanded, looking brightly up. "Nothing worth remembering, no doubt."

"It was a very sweet thing for you to say, and I have carried it in my heart ever since. It has often comforted me," he said, speaking slowly and tenderly.

She turned her eyes from him, and a puzzled look came into her face.

"You said I might be cheerful for your sake, and you said you would never forget me, and I kissed your hand for very joy," he added, his voice shaking passionately.

Her face grew suddenly crimson.

"I was a poor foolish girl. You took advantage of my want of worldly knowledge," she said with some vehemence, as the picture of the little scene rose before her. "You were older, — you ought not to have done that."

"I know, I know!" he exclaimed, with a waive of the hand and an impatient motion of the head; "I ought not to be standing here telling you this now, but I am. Rosalie, no other man will ever care for you — love you — as I do."

"Oh, you mustn't say these things to me. Aunt Marguerite has told me often that I must not listen to —"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted; "I have good reason to understand Mrs. Roosevelt's feelings towards me; of course she would object to me; but *you* do not object to me — *you* love me, don't you, Rosalie?"

It would stamp any man as a genius who could come upon a stage and utter those words as Ellis did.

Rosalie turned her sweet wide-open eyes full upon his face, her cheeks still suffused with blushes. She tried to speak, and the words seemed to cling to her lips. A little fluttering indrawn sigh was the only sound. She was utterly unable to meet his question in any way.

"Do you love me, Rosalie?" he urged, lowering his face until his breath warmed her cheek. Just then Julian came near, and Ellis assumed an erect attitude for the time. Julian had scarcely passed when Colonel Talbot came in. Rosalie, in a confused hurry to change the subject of conversation, said, —

"Have you been introduced to Colonel Talbot?"

Ellis started. He knew Talbot, and did not like him. He instantly recalled the day upon which he had met the little party out at Bonaventure; to this memory he added some hints he had heard of Talbot's frequent visits to the Roosevelt mansion. He fired in a moment.

"I do not like him," he said, putting intense meaning in his voice.

"Oh, I do, — I like him ever so much," said Rosalie, too confused to note the ominous change in the face of Ellis.

"I should like to kill him," he savagely muttered; "I should like to *kill* him!"

Just here Mrs. Roosevelt came to tell Rosalie that some duty required her immediate attention, and of course the interview ended. It had its effect upon Rosalie for the time; but one of her elastic nature soon gets rid of such things. Before the evening had passed she was bright and light-hearted as ever, though for days afterwards the dark, angry, jealous look of the young man's face would occasionally come up in her memory, and the recklessness of his life up in the pocket offered itself to lend emphasis to his savage words. She knew he was a man of deeds as well as of passionate impulses, and her imagination was not slow to picture what might come of his hatred for Talbot.

Now, after all the mysterious movements of Ellis during the moonlight walk just ended, it cannot be matter of surprise that Rosalie felt Talbot's imminent peril. As is the case with all imaginative young persons of narrow experience, Rosalie accepted the conclusions to which her mind sprung, with a perfect faith in their truthfulness. She sat there in her room and shuddered, feeling sure that dire injury would be inflicted upon Colonel Talbot on his way home. She knew Frank

Ellis well enough to be certain that he would not hesitate to remove any obstacle that came in his way, even if that obstacle were a man, and without any scruples as to method, so far as its danger to himself was concerned. As to his sense of honor, from the Southern point of view, she was not quite sure. He was brave and daring, almost reckless, very vindictive, passionate; but she was not sure that he was wicked any further than these traits would naturally make him so. She had a dim notion of the feelings of men in matters of love antagonisms, drawn from old romances and poems, and there may have been a trace in her nature of that hereditary Southern pride in personal valor which led her to think, with only a vague sense of its enormity, upon duelling, physical conflicts and personal chastisement for so-called honor's sake. She found herself quite irresolute, something she had never experienced till now; she went to a front window, and leaning far out, listened, she hardly could have imagined why. The moon was now well up toward the zenith, its light lying over the gray old city with glorious effect, and the sky was a great turquoise cup full of splendor. She turned her eyes upward, and as they brimmed with sudden tears she realized her first bitter regret.

No sadder thing can be imagined than the state of mind into which a young and innocent person is cast when the shadow of evil is projected into his or her consciousness as one of the elements of life.

From that moment a change begins, for good or bad, as manhood or womanhood takes the place of that which is our only remnant of the Arcadian being — unsophisticated and trusting youth. The change is a trying one, and the ruin it sometimes works is the most pathetic imaginable. Self-consciousness comes on so suddenly to one in Rosalie's situation. A few hours ago she was building air-castles for Mildred Fain, dreaming all sorts of happy things about her friend's future with her lover, but never once giving a thought to the possibility of that lover being false, and shrinking away from anything but the most impersonal and romantic imaginings touching her own love future, provided she ever should love. Now she leaned upon the window-sill with the soft shadows and the silver moonlight playing around her, and she saw how great a delusion love might be.

The next morning the servants brought to Roosevelt place a rumor that Colonel Talbot had been found in the street dead, murdered by some unknown person. When the papers were brought in they contained a full account. Colonel Talbot was not dead, but had been knocked senseless by a blow from a sand-bag or some such instrument. His condition was extremely critical. It had been impossible, so far, to restore his consciousness, and no clue to the perpetrator of the foul deed had been discovered. The whole thing was veiled in mystery. No robbery had been committed. The Colo-

nel's magnificent gold watch and seal, and his pocket-book, containing a small sum of money, were left undisturbed on his person. He was without enemies, so far as the reporters could discover, and not the slightest reason for his assassination suggested itself, save that it was darkly hinted that political intrigue might have led to it. A certain carpet-bag candidate for Congress, who had been beaten mainly by Talbot's exertions, was none too good, so the papers stated, to have done the deed, seeing that in his own State, Kansas, he had once been convicted of cow-stealing!

The blow fell heavily on Mildred Fain. As days and weeks passed by, with no change in Talbot's singular condition, she grew thin, and her face wore the look of one who has little left to care for. Rosalie witnessed her distress with a sympathy deepened and strangely colored by the knowledge she carried. She had told no one what she knew about the matter, and this secrecy preyed upon her. No doubt she would have told Mrs. Roosevelt, had it not been for her aunt's deep-seated prejudice against Ellis. Then, too, circumstances had rendered the young man's guilt a matter of mystery, if not of serious doubt, in her mind. No one else seemed to suspect him, and, in fact, his presence in the city on the night of the crime was contradicted by his being, on the day previous, at Jessup, a town many miles south of the city, where he had an important meeting with railroad friends.

Rosalie often felt an impulse towards writing to

Ellis, but quite as often she recoiled from the thought. She sometimes longed to see him and hear what he would say to the dreadful accusation; then she would start and tremble at the idea of talking with a murderer. The poor child—for in experience she was scarcely more—could do nothing save brood over this strange dark subject by day and dream of it by night. Mildred Fain came often to see her, and they aggravated rather than softened each other's distress.

Mrs. Roosevelt quickly noticed her niece's trouble, and after a little thought attributed it to a tender feeling on her part for Colonel Talbot. It would have pleased Aunt Marguerite very much, if Rosalie *must* marry, to see her become the wife of a representative Southerner like Talbot. Of course she was not informed of his engagement with Miss Fain, as it had not become public; and he was wealthy, of good family, handsome and fascinating. But Aunt Marguerite was too shrewd a woman of the world to venture any meddling. She shrank from contemplating such a thing as Rosalie leaving her, even to marry a low-country aristocrat, and she was afraid to have the subject of love considered between them, for fear that if once the thought got started it might never stop.

So Rosalie was left to bear the burden of her suspicions, her doubts, her fears, her hopes, all alone. It was a great load for a bright, innocent, unsophisticated mind to be weighted with. It could not wholly drive out the gayety and spright-

liness; it did not blot the roses and dimples from her cheeks, nor did it dim her eyes; but it hung like a cloud on the horizon, all the time threatening to overcast her whole sky.

It was some weeks after the attempted assassination of Talbot that Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Largely and Edgar Julian returned from Florida. After all, they had been out-generalled and beaten by Ellis. Largely had attempted to get a restraining order on the affidavit and bill drawn up by Julian, but Ellis had avoided the whole matter by persuading Largely's Floridian coadjutors that it would be safer to tie their faith to a Southern man rather than to an adventurer from Illinois. Mr. Roosevelt had interposed with a proposition of compromise, which, being favorable to Sir Edmond Kane's schemes, received the support of all the foreigners, and was finally, with some modifications, accepted by Ellis; but the victory was with the young mountaineer, giving him control of a strong combination of roads which, in the future, would be of immense value.

"I never saw a fellow so full of expedients and so popular with everybody," said Largely to Mr. Roosevelt during the course of the adjustment.

"He was the man you were going to crush inside of twenty-four hours," replied Mr. Roosevelt.

"You thought he had no backing," added Julian.

Largely winced, and rolling a cigar across his mouth from one corner to the other, chuckled dryly and said, —

"He is like an eel: when you get him you can't hold him. Talk about a Yankee being slick!"

"I shall never again think of a bill in equity without recollecting how easily he punctured your injunction scheme," said Julian, with something like harmless exultation in his tone.

"After all," interposed Mr. Roosevelt, "Ellis has done nothing not strictly honorable, and he deserves all he has gained."

"Oh, I admire the fellow. Talk of Western cheek and impudence, — why, he's worse than a lightning-rod man!" responded Largely; "he talks his way right through everything. As for lying, his sort of misrepresentation can hardly be called that, but he promises everything that he thinks will please."

"The people like and honor him greatly," said Mr. Roosevelt; "he makes friends of high and low."

"Yes," laughed Largely, "he has made friends even out of us! Here we sit marshalling his various qualities and attainments, while he walks off with the prize."

Julian had gone to a window, and was looking out into one of those little orchards so often seen in Jacksonville, where clumps of orange and fig trees and huge banana stalks are all crowded together in a minimum of space.

"I like Ellis as I like the South," he said, half-reflectively; "he is so warm and strong, and luxuriant, and yet so elusive and subtle, has such a reserve of what may be treachery or heroism, one hardly dares guess which."

"Call it heroic treachery," suggested Largely, blowing out a level, slender jet of smoke.

"I am not prepared to do that," said Julian; "but lately I have been able to comprehend how Stonewall Jackson accomplished his wonders in the valley. Think of an army of men like Francis Whitcomb Ellis!"

Largely chuckled, but made no reply. The subject was not one he cared to pursue in this vein. He was really vastly chagrined over the turn affairs were taking. He cared for nothing so much as making money, and, while his Southern investments were safe and reasonably promising, they were not likely now to prove what he called a bonanza. He looked upon Ellis as a charlatan, whom accident, and what he called "cheek," had floated into power. He had none of Julian's appreciative insight into the young mountaineer's genius. Being without imagination himself, he could not follow the lines of Ellis' brilliant conceptions, and, for that reason, could not account for his "great good luck."

When Mr. Roosevelt and his Northern companions reached Savannah, the city was full of Northern tourists. Julian met with a number of his friends at the Pulaski House.

"Why, you've become a real Southerner," exclaimed Miss Hart, who was touring with her artist brother, Claude Hart, a member of a New York art club; "your sombrero proclaims you a cattle-herder, or a Ku-Klux, or something nice."

"You chill me like a blast from Labrador," Julian rejoined; "I shall have to look up my seal-skin cap and top-coat."

"Have you bought an orange-grove?" inquired Hart, a round-faced, genial little fellow, who was making some sketches for a New York magazine. "I'm in search of groves. I am going to buy me a nickel's worth."

"Yes," said the sister, "Claude has sold a picture, and is on his way to invest its price."

Miss Hart was very different from the Southern girls: she was vivid, quick, self-assertive, rather high-voiced, and altogether unconventional. She was a tall, strong blonde, and when walking beside her brother in the street had the air of one who is burdened with the care of a rather reckless boy.

Julian had ample opportunity for comparing together Northern and Southern girls as he passed along the streets or lingered in the shady parks. They were different in their walk, their bearing, their voices, their dress. Northern girls are more picturesque, Southern girls more statuesque. Northern girls are noisier, Southern girls more prudish. Northern girls have sincerer voices, but the Southern girls give more evidence in their speech of hereditary refinement. You rarely see a Northern girl who has that true patrician air which belongs to maidens of aristocratic Southern families; but the Northern girl seems more liberal, more cultured. It scarcely need be said that Julian all the time kept Rosalie Chenier in his mind. She

seemed to him quite unlike any other girl—quite different from both the Northern and Southern type. She appeared more like what the Southern girl *ought to be*. But he quickly detected the change taking place in her face and manner. His few weeks of absence from Roosevelt place had ripened her, and to a certain degree turned her from a girl to a woman. She was more serious, more reserved, and her fine gray-brown eyes had gathered a shadow in them as if of mysterious womanly wisdom. This change had the effect of distance. She seemed a great way farther off than when he first knew her. If she was simply charming at first, now she was fascinating after the manner of incomparable things. He was fully aware of his love for her, and he did not mean to hide it or restrain it

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHENIER CROSS.

TO Edgar Julian the calamity that had fallen upon Colonel Warren Talbot presented nothing especially strange or incomprehensible. He considered it the result of some private quarrel, growing out of a business transaction, perhaps. Of course he knew nothing of the circumstances that have been detailed touching the conduct of Ellis, nor of the mysterious incidents of Rosalie's moonlight walk with Talbot, and he did not dream of any possible connection of Miss Chenier with the matter.

Some things he had ordered came from Chicago during his stay at Jacksonville; among them was the Provence cross. One day he took this, and without any preliminary words, let the gold chain attached to it fall around Rosalie's neck.

"Thus," said he, turning to Mrs. Roosevelt, "I restore to Miss Chenier the old ancestral cross of her family."

In the midst of her recent trouble Rosalie had actually forgotten her dreams of Provence and of the souvenir that Julian had promised to fetch.

Now, as she glanced at the antique cross and chain, a rush of strange sensations overcame her. A deep blush flowed into her cheeks, and ebbing almost instantly, left her face intensely pale.

Mrs. Roosevelt rose and went to her niece. She had heard from Rosalie the story of this cross, and in fact she had heard it many a time in her own young girlhood. It was one of the Chenier traditions.

"It is not a bad ornament," said Julian, taking a step backward and looking critically at the dull gold as it lay across the beads of red insect-amber on the girl's white throat. "That dint, the peasant told me, was caused by his hoe or mattock, or whatever he dug with, striking it; but I like to imagine it was caused by an arrow or spear in some glorious fight of the olden time." He said this, knowing that Rosalie would like to hear it. He watched her face closely. She looked up into his eyes with nearly the old simplicity and naïvete. Her cheeks grew rosy again. He could see her imagination take fire and flame in those deep pure eyes.

Mrs. Roosevelt examined the cross attentively.

"I do not know if it is genuine," she said; "but it has all the appearance of an antique thing."

"Oh, it is genuine," said Julian quickly; "it was dug up just a few days before I got it. I gave no antiquarian a chance; so soon as I saw it I bought it, and made the finder agree not to tell any one about discovering or selling it. I was afraid of litigation."

But you don't mean to give it to me," said Rosalie, so sincerely and with such evident earnestness that it caused him to laugh.

"Why, that's all I wanted it for," he just as frankly replied; "I couldn't possibly put it to any use for myself. Then, you know, I promised to fetch you a memento from Chateau Chenier."

Rosalie looked at Aunt Marguerite, as if mutely asking a question; but that very charming old lady did not notice it.

"How papa would be pleased to see it!" continued Rosalie, toying with the ornament.

"You might send it to him," suggested Mrs. Roosevelt.

"I should be afraid it might get lost or stolen on the way," replied Rosalie.

"And I wish you to wear it for its memory's sake; don't ever take it off, Miss Chenier, it will bring you good fortune," exclaimed Julian. "Promise me you won't *ever* take it off, will you?" This last sentence was more a trembling prayer than a light remark. Before Mrs. Roosevelt could formulate a clever sentence with which to prevent it, Rosalie answered, —

"Yes, I will always wear it if you desire it. You couldn't ask anything easier as a return for your generous thoughtfulness in bringing it to me."

Mrs. Roosevelt caught her breath and looked helplessly at her niece.

Julian recognized in Rosalie's voice the ring of utter simplicity; it was very charming, but just

then he would have preferred a touch of artfulness or even coquetry. It seemed to him that it was high time for her to understand what he meant and to leave off this childish way of literal interpretation. In fact, consideration of this Provençal cross had made her an unsophisticated mountain maid again.

A young man who is thoroughly in love sees many evidences of originality, individuality and rare personality in his sweetheart, just as a mother sees these qualities in her babe. Julian, as he fondly gazed down upon the girl's bright shapely head and prettily drooping shoulders, thought her the very flower of womanly beauty.

An hour later, when Mrs. Roosevelt had gone to the parlor to entertain some old-lady visitors, Julian enticed Rosalie to the veranda. Northern persons in the South enjoy to the full the luxury of those broad verandas. The novelty of sitting in the open air in mid-winter has its charm, disconnected from any influence of vines and trees and flowers and the balm of semi-tropical breezes. The Southerners laugh at the extremes to which Northern people go in response to the warm influence of the climate, as, for instance, when youthful dandies affect the cool, airy garb of midsummer in January, or when young ladies go upon the streets in white dresses and watering-place hats.

But Julian was not aware of any other motive than a desire to be quite alone with Rosalie when he drew her to the veranda. He took the banjo

along and asked her to sing. When in a girlish, almost gleeful voice she began "*La Mandorc*," she had utterly forgotten the circumstances attending her last singing of it. But when Julian joined in with his clear tenor voice it troubled her; she stopped in the midst, and said, —

"Why, where did you learn my little song?"

"A French artist with whom I spent some time at Agen was all the while singing it," he replied.

"It is a fascinating jingle. I wonder if it ever was a Provençal song?"

"I don't know," she replied; "papa has sung it ever since I can remember, but always in French."

"I think I should like your father very much. I want some excuse for going to see him as I pass through North Georgia on my way home. Can't you invent some good reason?"

"Are you going soon?" she quickly inquired. The thought made her homesick.

"Not very soon," he replied; "not if — if I can help it."

He stammered, because there came a rush of thoughts. His going or staying was dependent upon her answer to a question he meant to submit for her consideration. He looked into her inscrutable young face, and was afraid; so much hung upon the outcome of his purposed venture; if she should refuse him, what then? He saw that the color of his life would be caught from her answer. But he could not procrastinate,—push and rush was the spirit of his education. Now or never had been his motto.

He had drawn his chair close to hers.

"I need not stay much longer," he added; "all my business here is measurably finished, and I have affairs in Chicago that will soon demand my attention; but I cannot go before Mr. Ellis returns from Florida with Sir Edmond Kane to close up the compromise we have effected."

He saw her start as he mentioned Ellis' name; the blood slowly left her cheek; her eyelids drooped sadly; thoughtful creases came in her forehead under the shining fringe of curls. A vague pang of jealousy shot through his breast.

"Miss Chenier," he murmured, "when I sat upon the wall of the old chateau at Provence, as the sweet shades of twilight gathered round me, I often heard your voice as if you were calling me back. Did you ever want to see me while I was gone?"

She looked up quickly, wholly coming back from painful recollections; but her eyes fell before his troubled, burning gaze.

"I have loved you from the first," he added passionately, "and I must tell you so. You —"

"Hush, sir, hush — you must not — I cannot listen — please!"

She put forth her hand as if to thrust him far away from her; but the tender quaver of her voice doubled his ecstasy.

"You have already heard," he exclaimed vehemently; "what more could I say? I love you and that is all. It means everything worth living for."

He was a powerful advocate. She looked helplessly at him, a blinding mist filling her eyes. He took her hand and leaned towards her. She started and stared past him. Frank Ellis stood in the doorway giving upon the veranda. She almost leaped to her feet. The banjo fell on the floor with a resonant clang. Julian turned and met the Southerner's concentrated stare with very little show of embarrassment. He rose and made a movement towards greeting him cordially ; but Ellis loftily ignored him. Rosalie offered her hand, and said, —

“ We have been speaking of you, or Mr. Julian has. Will you sit down here, — we have found it delightfully airy and cool.”

Julian picked up the banjo with one hand, offering Ellis the other. He had not noticed the latter's attempt to avoid him. The hand was not taken, however, and with a quick sense of resentment it was withdrawn. Ellis did not sit down. He stood as if enveloped in a dark frown, his eyes gloomily questioning Rosalie's face. He seemed to be repressing a great rush of anger or some other wicked emotion. His face was a lawless, almost reckless one for the moment. A mood of the mountain life was upon him. Rosalie felt rather than saw this, for she had merely glanced at his face. In her own mind all the strange dark thoughts of the past few weeks had leaped up anew.

Julian looked back and forth, from the man to the girl and from her to him, a weight gathering

in his bosom. As a lawyer he had been a keen student of human nature and of human faces. He was conscious of the existence of a common thought between these two; it greatly irritated him. He was not prepared for such an interruption. Then, too, Ellis' bearing was intolerable; it was evidently meant to be insulting.

Such a situation could not last long. Ellis rallied and said to Rosalie, —

“Your uncle, Mr. Roosevelt,—shall I probably find him at his office?”

“Yes. I believe he and Mr. Largely are there; but won't you sit down with us awhile?” she responded, with an effort to be bright and cheerful.

“No, I will come back, perhaps,” he said. He flashed a glance at Julian, and bowing low before Rosalie in the old Southern way, walked through the hall and out of the house. The true impression of this short interview is hard to give in words. In Rosalie's mind it had a significance which she did not like to consider. She had read in the face of Ellis some dark resolve which might end in another deed of revenge. She turned to Julian, pale and trembling, and laid her hand upon his arm, then hesitated a moment. Finally,—

“Promise to ask me no questions, and I will tell you something,” she quaveringly murmured.

“Of course I promise,” he promptly replied, a presentiment of evil falling duskily into his mind.

“You must watch Mr. Ellis; he is a very, *very* dangerous man,” she added, her voice falling into a whisper which thrilled him strangely.

"Oh, that will be all right, I shall not trouble him," said Julian, in a great hurry to return to the point where Ellis had interrupted him. "You must tell me now if you love me, Rosalie—Miss Chenier. The whole joy of my life depends on it—do not refuse me—answer me, tell me now."

Men are always awkward in such scenes. Eloquence deserts them, and, no matter how terribly in earnest they may be, they blunder, stammer and make themselves ridiculous. But Rosalie felt too strongly the shock of the situation to be able to avoid the direct issue he raised.

They were standing near the railing of the veranda where the broad leaves of a thick-topped palmetto brushed against a heavy square column; beyond this the court-wall shut out the street.

"I cannot think now—I do not know what to say to you," she exclaimed. "Let me go, please—let me be all alone for a while. You must not talk to me about—about this now." She took a step or two backward as if going to run away, then stopped and added, "I am dizzy," putting her hand to her head; "I am faint."

He sprang to her side, but she pushed him away, more with a gesture than a touch.

"Excuse me,—I am ill,—let me go to my room," she managed to say; and turning into the hall tottered up-stairs.

To Julian all this was surpassingly strange. He could see no cause for such excitement. He was standing all bewildered, gazing up the great wind-

ing stairs when Mrs. Roosevelt came into the hall, her visitors having gone.

“I believe Miss Chenier is sick, — I think you had better go to her room,” he said; then he took his hat and went out to walk and think. He was little prepared for what was soon to follow.

CHAPTER XX.

OUT FROM THE SHOULDER.

EDGAR JULIAN put a cigar in his mouth without lighting it, and contemplatively gazed at the brick or shelled sidewalks as he passed along, aimlessly strolling in the breezy shade of the trees. Somehow he felt that Rosalie loved him, notwithstanding her strange action. It was useless for him to attempt to unravel, just then, the mystery of her excitement or of Ellis' unwonted impoliteness. Between himself and the latter he knew of no reason for a quarrel. In their business transactions Ellis had had things quite his own way, and there had never been any but the kindest words between them. Surely, the man could not be so foolish as to fall into a passion because he was addressing Miss Chenier! The difference between the North and the South at this point had not occurred to him. Quarrels about sweethearts are not common in the North: in the South they are. Politics and love were the fighting subjects in the palmy days of duelling and bowie-knives. To die for his lady-love was as proud a fate as any knight of Southern chivalry cared to encounter.

There was a current saying in the low country that, when two young gentlemen were paying attention to the same girl, a fight was brewing; if she finally favored one, the other felt bound to challenge his successful rival. "No man shall marry the girl I love," was the motto of chivalry, implied if not expressed. Of course, comparatively, few love affairs finally came to a fight, because prudent young men, knowing the consequences of a quarrel, looked ahead, and withdrew where the chances were against them. Still the danger remained, and when once a quarrel had begun it usually ran on to the end of the "code." Of this latent custom Julian had heard, but he thought of it as having fallen into desuetude at the close of the war. He was rather quick to take affront, and ready to strike hard at need, as Western men usually are; but he would never have thought of a duel in connection with a quarrel; much less would he have dreamed of calling a gentleman to account for manly attentions to a young lady, even his sweetheart. Therefore when, after an indefinite stroll, he at last found himself entering the Pulaski House and meeting face to face with Ellis, he was profoundly surprised at being accosted as follows, in a low, determined tone:—

"Will you at once cease your attentions to Miss Chenier?"

He looked into the young man's face, expecting to see that he was drunk; but such was not the case. He was sober, calm, and evidently meant to

be answered. A glance was enough. Julian did not hesitate.

"I shall do just as I please," he slowly and meaningly replied.

Quick as lightning Ellis slapped him in the face with the tip of his gloved hand, saying, as he did so, —

"You know what *that* means!"

What followed was something quite new in Savannah. Julian did not say a word, but squared himself like a prize-fighter, tapped out lightly with his left hand, and followed with his right, letting go a resounding blow straight out from the shoulder against the side of his opponent's head. Ellis went whirling back, and falling heavily at full length upon the floor, lay there almost senseless, while a number of men quickly gathered around. Julian still had the cigar in his mouth. He went to the clerk's counter and lighted it as coolly as though nothing had happened.

In a few moments Ellis had recovered himself, but his head was terribly shaken by the shock, and he found it difficult to stand. As soon as he could fix his fiery eyes on Julian, he said, —

"It was a coward's blow."

"You'll be a little careful hereafter about flipping your glove in my face, I suspect," calmly replied the Northerner.

"I'll put a bullet in the place of my glove, if you are not a coward," rejoined Ellis.

"I shall defend myself at every point," said Ju-

lian, who thereupon turned about and went out of the room. As he did so a hand fell on his shoulder, and Hart, the artist, said, —

“What sort of a row is this you’ve been having, Julian?”

“Oh, I knocked a man down for striking me,” replied Julian; then after a pause he added, “I wish it hadn’t happened — I hate it. But what’s a man to do? I can’t allow a fellow to whack me in the face with his glove!”

While speaking, Julian was rubbing the knuckles of his right hand that had been considerably bruised by the blow.

“You must have let him have a solid jolt,” said Hart; “he looked as though his head had been under a pile-driver. He thumped on the floor so heavily that he jarred the house!”

“I took him by surprise,” said Julian, smiling grimly; “he wasn’t expecting such a thing. He didn’t even dodge. His feet flew almost as high as his head.”

“Did you knock him all the way from where you stood there by the door to where he lay by the counter?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that scores one for Chicago over Savannah. Wonder what these young Southern bloods will think of it?”

“This will not end it,” said Julian, reflectively. “I dread what is yet to come.”

“Will you be arrested? I’ll go your bail, and stand by you till it’s over, if you are.”

"Not that — no danger of that ; but he will force further and worse difficulty upon me."

"Well, if he does, just knock him again," said Hart.

"You forget that we are in the South, Hart, or you would foresee the trouble. He will challenge me."

"For a duel?"

"Yes."

Hart reflected awhile. The word duel startled him. It had a very deadly sound. He was not used to hearing it. It had fallen from his lips as if it had been something that burned them.

"And what shall you do?" he inquired, looking sharply into Julian's face.

"I don't know, — have him arrested and sent to the penitentiary, probably."

"You can't afford to do that," said Hart ; "no man can, especially, as you remind me, here in the South."

"But it is a penitentiary offence by the code of this State, to send or to accept a challenge," responded Julian.

"Oh, but that goes for nothing. Public opinion defies the law. If I were you I would get away from here at once, if I could."

"I'll do nothing of the sort," said Julian firmly.

"Then I'll wager you a supper at Delmonico's that you fight him !"

"You'll lose if you do."

Julian parted with Hart, and happening to re-

member that he had an engagement with Mr. Roosevelt, went to his office. He was not there. Mr. Hosea Jenkins, the factotum, said that a very important telegraphic despatch from a relative had just been received, and that Mr. Roosevelt had made haste to go to his house to bear the sad news that his niece's mother was very sick and would probably die. She wished her daughter to come at once. Jenkins told all this with the dry precision and angularity of one whose mind contains nothing but numerals and tables of interest, market quotations and railroad time-sheets. He sat at a high desk with a big ledger open before him. He had a pencil behind each ear and a pen in his hand.

"Is it Miss Chenier's mother who is ill?" demanded Julian.

"Yes, in the up-country somewhere," replied Jenkins, who, though a Yankee, was proud of his Southern acquirements.

"Will the young lady go immediately?"

"Yes, sir; that is, Mr. Roosevelt telegraphed to his superintendent to get ready a special sleeper and engine."

"How long since he left here?"

"An hour, sir."

Julian turned from the office into the street and walked rapidly to the Roosevelt mansion. It seemed to him that everything was assuming an attitude hostile to his happiness, and hurrying him on to some great calamity. But he must see Rosalie before she went away. The thought of parting from her was just now peculiarly bitter.

When he reached the house a servant informed him that Mrs. Roosevelt and her niece had already gone to the station. Mr. Roosevelt wished to send their special out behind the regular afternoon passenger train so as to run upon its time.

Julian felt a strange sinking of the heart. Altogether, the day had been a trying one; and now to have Rosalie slip away from him, to be gone for an indefinite time, just when his fate was trembling in the balance of her decision, was too much. He drew his hand across his forehead, upon which cold beads of perspiration had gathered. He felt as though all his will-power were deserting him. How strangely empty the great old house looked! There was her banjo, leaning against the dark panelled wall.

He looked at his watch; it was ten minutes yet to train time; he could reach the station before she was gone if he could find a carriage. He hurried into the street again and looked in every direction. Then he went to the Pulaski House, hoping to find a 'bus or cab lingering there; but the fates were against him.

An hour later, a colored boy brought him a note from Mr. Roosevelt, who wished to see him at the office. He went immediately, and found there Mr. Largely also. A conference had been agreed upon with Sir Edmond Kane, and this meeting was for some precautionary consultation.

Julian's mind was more concerned with Rosalie than with business. His first inquiry of Mr. Roose-

velt was about her. Had she gone alone? No, her aunt had accompanied her. They had a special car. Mr. Roosevelt had sent his oldest and most careful railroad man along with them.

"But what is this rumor we hear of a fight between you and Ellis?" said Largely, who was highly gratified to learn that the mountaineer had at last "run against a solid header," as he termed it.

Julian explained without explaining. He did not hint of any connection Miss Chenier's name had had with the affair.

"I regret all this very much," said Mr. Roosevelt; "Ellis comes of a fighting family; he will challenge you immediately."

"If he does, I'll have him arrested forthwith," replied Julian.

Mr. Roosevelt straightened himself stiffly in his chair, and gazed at the young man in utter disgust.

"That would be just the thing," exclaimed Largely. "It might have a good educating effect on the young men hereabouts, if we'd make an example of one by landing him safely in the State's prison. What do you say, Mr. Roosevelt?"

"I should think a *gentleman* would get dry comfort out of such a proceeding."

"Yes, ha! ha! ha! — yes, you're right," chuckled Largely; "a *gentleman* would feel *queer* in the penitentiary."

Julian was not so obtuse to Mr. Roosevelt's meaning. He saw at once that Rosalie's uncle

held strictly to the old code of honor, and it flashed across his mind that she too might do the same.

Mr. Roosevelt called up business, which for the time ended the consideration of what to Julian had suddenly grown into a vital question. The young man had pretty deeply rooted convictions touching the dignity of law and the unworthiness of the wilful law-breaker. He was not inclined to grade criminals or to draw fine distinctions in comparing crimes. The disgrace of felony was not measured, he thought, by the amount of the punishment inflicted. A day in State's prison was as bad as a lifetime there. Nor could the evasion of the penalty serve to avoid the disgrace. Popular approval seemed as nothing to him unless it was founded in right, in truth, in moral honor.

Mr. Roosevelt took Julian's arm as they walked homeward in the dusky streets, where the lights twinkled through the low-hanging foliage. When he spoke it was with that tender gravity a father assumes when addressing a son over whom he no longer has or desires to have compulsory power.

"Mr. Julian, this affair of yours with Mr. Ellis disturbs me," he said. "Of course I shall not presume to inquire as to its real origin; but I do wish it could be adjusted without further publicity. I take it for granted, sir, that your acts have all been of the most honorable kind, and I have grown to like you greatly."

"You have the highest right, Mr. Roosevelt, to know the minutest details of this whole matter,"

replied Julian. "I have thought it all over, and I desire to tell you now how this affair originated."

He then went forward and laid bare every particular, reserving nothing. The old man silently listened, and, when Julian had ended, simply said, —

"I felt sure that was it. I have been fearing it for some time."

They walked on without further words after this till they reached the gate at Roosevelt place; here the old man stopped a moment, still holding Julian's arm.

"Promise me," he said, "that you will take no further steps in this matter without consulting me."

"Certainly, if you wish it. I shall be proud to have your counsel. I thank you sincerely for your friendship; I need it," responded Julian, "for I am greatly at a loss as to my duty. You are older and wiser."

When the young man lay down upon his bed that night and reviewed the scenes and events of the past day, he felt sick at heart. How little of a hero he was! All his acts seemed to him the acts of a weak man. He stretched out his heavy, muscular limbs and sighed fretfully, impatiently. It galled him to think that his was a common soul — that he could not rise above the circumstances of ordinary life — that he must do vulgar things and care for vulgar approbation. What would Rosalie think of him when she heard of what had happened? In his selfishness he did not once imagine

the poor young head bowed in grief at the thought of a dying mother. He wrestled with his own trouble and nursed his love for her. His strength could compass nothing more. Her fair young face haunted the shadows of his room, and her voice seemed calling to him out of the starry distances seen through the wide windows opposite his bed. All night long he heard the sea-breeze singing over the roof.

Next morning he rose from his bed resolved not to fight a duel, let the result be as it might. What cared he for Southern sentiment and custom! He owed his allegiance to Chicago and not to Savannah.

When he went into the breakfast-room he found that Mr. Roosevelt had already gone down town, having been sent for by some one, the servant said. Later it transpired that it was Mr. Largely's message, and the business in hand was to consult over a sudden turn in railroad affairs. In short, Ellis had sold out all his interests to Sir Edmond Kane and party. This simplified matters, so that an adjustment of the Florida muddle proved quite easy. Mr. Roosevelt and Julian were greatly surprised. As for Mr. Largely, he swore roundly that Ellis had some devilish scheme in his head, and said that he felt sure no good ever could come of the fellow.

To the further surprise of everybody, Ellis disappeared as soon as his sale was consummated. Julian received no challenge. Days slipped by.

A letter came from Mrs. Roosevelt announcing the death and burial of Mrs. Chenier. Julian's mission was ended, and Mr. Largely was ready to return to Chicago.

"I haven't seen enough of the South yet," said Julian, by way of excuse for not accompanying his employer on his northward flight; "and I think I shall linger awhile in Atlanta and some of the smaller mountain towns. I want to revisit two or three of the battle-grounds over which I charged when a soldier lad."

"All right," replied the millionaire, "you know your business best; but I, individually, have got about all the South I shall ever care for."

Edgar Julian's departure from Savannah was abrupt. He read the following personal item in the "News," and left on the next train:—

Mr. Francis W. Ellis, who recently sold his railroad interests in Florida to the English and Dutch combination, is spending a few weeks among the mountains of the up-country, near Calhoun. It will be remembered that he formerly had a large distillery in that region, the capture of which by Government emissaries caused great excitement at the time. It was rumored that a duel was pending between Mr. Ellis and a noted Chicago lawyer, but the matter has most probably been amicably arranged. Mr. Ellis' career here has been short but brilliant. It is understood that he netted about five hundred thousand dollars on his roads. Pretty good for a little less than three months' work!

CHAPTER XXI.

LOITERING.

FROM Savannah to Yemasee in South Carolina, and thence across to Augusta, Georgia, was Julian's first flight. A great portion of the way lay through such swamps as Gilmore Simms delighted to describe in his novels. Dense cane-brakes, wild tangles of magnolia-bay, jungles of semi-aquatic weeds and grass, dark woods of live-oak, and here and there level stretches of sandy pine barren lands were interspersed with plantations whose dilapidated houses and straggling fences were emphasized in their expression of poverty by the lean, sallow people who stood in disconsolate groups about the little pine-board stations.

That part of the Southern white population called "crackers" afforded Julian much pathetic uneasiness of mind. Their faces and their figures were forlorn, their dress coarse and scant, their surroundings desolate and hopeless. Young girls, lank and sallow, with vacant faces and bony sunburnt hands, stood in the doorways of low, dingy cabins, their bare yellow feet showing below dirty cotton gowns, and gazed stupidly as the cars whirled past.

Young men, flaxen-haired, thin-bearded, skinny, aimless, dull-eyed, long-legged, homespun-dressed, lolled against the fences or slouched through the woods carrying long flint-locked rifles. A very old man and his wife got into the car at a little swamp station and rode to the next stopping-place. The man wore no coat; his shirt, which was of cross-barred homespun, was open at the throat, where his white beard straggled down upon his bosom; his trousers were of copperas jeans, very tight, and made with the front flap and side pockets of a century ago; his shoes turned up at the toes in long points, showing the heavy thong stitches of primitive cobbler work. The woman's face was a network of wrinkles, and she was toothless, but not a gray thread was in her hair. No such bombazine as that of her dress has been woven since fifty years ago. She carried a large reticule, out of which protruded the cane stem of a malodorous pipe.

At one time a middle-aged woman, who had a baby in her arms, occupied the seat next in front of Julian, and for a full hour steadily mopped her teeth with snuff, using for the purpose a brush made by chewing the end of a dogwood stick until the fibres were separated into a soft, pliant mass.

In Augusta he tarried for a day, but why he did so he could not have told. That he was dreaming of finally making his way to Rosalie he admitted, and at the same time he did not purpose to see her at all. Love is always thus paradoxical. He knew

that Ellis was up in North Georgia on no other errand than to be near her, and he could not bear to think of any one, much less Ellis, seeing her oftener than he; still he wasted a day in Augusta, idly strolling in the streets and thinking of what an unpardonable thing it would be for him to follow Miss Chenier to her home under such circumstances. He was adrift; he felt an element of uncertainty generating in his nature, as if the rapid and irritating occurrences of the last few days had acted like a disintegrating acid upon his will-power. He was not excited, nor in a stupor; he simply loitered and hesitated on his way to—nowhere. Life, as he indifferently looked ahead, seemed a charmless level plain upon which he had been thrust out of the green hills of his prime. He was not aware that he was sentimentalizing; on the other hand, he felt intensely practical, dry, unimaginative—a very common clod. The country, as the car whirled him out of Augusta on his way to Atlanta, was as barren as his mood. Brushy hills, red and spiritless, with now and then patches of cultivated land, looked like the billows of a muddy sea. Here and there an old-time plantation residence peered dolefully between the trees, its roof broken, its weather-boards curled and decaying. The conductor pointed out to the passengers as they passed it, the cottage of Paul Hayne, the beloved Southern poet, high up on an airy hill in the midst of a copse of oaks and pines. There was little in the landscape to inspire song; barren soil

and ragged thickets, no grass, no well-kept fields, no cosey homes, no broad-winged barns, nothing to suggest pleasing thoughts, or to give an idea of breadth or strength or grandeur.

No doubt the season, midwinter, not cold but sere and gray, so different from the white, windy, frigid winter of the North, helped to confirm Julian's feeling of isolation and loneliness. His whole mission in the South seemed a spiritless blank, an insipid failure. He had not been used to having his efforts fall flat; but now his mood was to accept discomfiture as something to be attributed to the natural effect of the climate and the strange perversity of the Southern mind. He wondered, as he passed Crawfordsville, how so great a man as Alexander H. Stephens had been content for forty years to live in that little weather-beaten house on the outskirts of the sleepy old village. He had been used to seeing congressmen erect brownstone mansions in the city, and Queen Anne cottages at Long Branch. Surely this hot, drowsy low-country climate possessed the power of quieting the imaginations of men long steeped in its influence. No art, no literature to speak of, no visible audible energy. "I am under its influence," he thought; "its spell is on me; I will go home." And yet, when he got to Atlanta he stopped and loitered. Here a sharp breeze of the world's industries struck him. There was a hum in the air—a stir in the streets. He now and then heard the familiar Western accent and the sharp Yankee

twang. He took a carriage and drove about the city. The grand new homes that line Peachtree street somehow appeared out of keeping, as if a section of Chicago or Cleveland had been brought there for a temporary show. A wind from the mountains, crisp and keen, had a hint of real winter in it, which made him button his coat and turn his face from its stronger puffs.

At the hotel table and in the lobby he heard men discussing gold-mines. It seemed that exciting discoveries had been made in the Etowa region and further north. The newspapers were full of it, but he was without curiosity and would have passed those columns by if his eye had not chanced to fall upon the following head-lines:—

“A BRILLIANT SWOOP! FRANCIS W. ELLIS GETS CONTROL OF ALL THE MOST PROMISING GOLD LANDS! WHILE THE FOGIES ARE POTTERING, THE YOUNG-BLOOD SEIZES THE PRIZE!”

Julian read, and felt a little thrill creep over him. His enemy's genius commanded his admiration. Here was the audacity, the rapidity, the certainty of Napoleonic power. It presented a vivid contrast to the spirit of the old South. It was an instance of the new birth. Ellis prefigured the future South,—fervid, quick, ambitious, imaginative, fond of display, imperious, rich, dangerous, a people of deeds, little art, less literature, accomplishing everything by sudden *coups*, through the influence of the few over the many. Julian began to foresee how this bold, lawless, audacious young

mountaineer might compass almost any ambition. The prestige of his name was already beginning to make his way easy before him. It was not, as it would have been in the North, a matter of logic and deep planning to succeed with the people, for here was a population ready to follow a leader, not to drive him — clay in the hands of the potter.

It came into Julian's mind that he would dearly like to show himself this man's superior in some better way than that of mere brute force; but he saw no probable channel of action open to his effort. The material at hand was useless to him; he was not constituted to make anything of it. His training had been of too modern and practical a cast to be available in a Southern field. Of course, it was but an idle thought, born of a tenderer jealousy than that arising out of mere personal ambition, and Julian flung it from him. He lingered in Atlanta a week. It was as if he dreaded to attempt to pass a point between there and Chattanooga, a point at which he longed to stop, and at which he had resolved not to stop. Ah, the foolishness of being in love!

One day, as Julian sat by a window of his hotel, he saw Ellis go slowly past in a splendid carriage drawn by a superb team. By his side sat a United States senator, facing him were the chief justice of the State and a distinguished ex-governor. Four months ago this man had been a moonshiner and a hunted outlaw! His success had dated from the day of his arrest. His first victory had been won

by fascinating his captors and obtaining a compromise, which saved him a fortune and made him notoriety.

It chanced that Ellis lifted his eyes as the carriage passed, and saw Edgar Julian gazing at him. His face lighted up with anger, and he turned to the senator, and said, —

“There is a d — d Yankee lawyer, in the hotel yonder, who struck me in Savannah. I should have challenged him, but he threatened to have me arrested.”

“You’d better be careful about how you challenge,” remarked the judge; “our courts are going to be severer on that crime than almost any other.”

“So my lawyer in Savannah told me,” said Ellis; “and it made a drivelling coward of me. The thought of the penitentiary — ugh!”

The senator laughed, the judge smiled gravely, and the calm-faced ex-governor quietly said, —

“That proves the law a good one. To restrain and not to punish is the highest office of a criminal statute.”

A look came into Ellis’ face which said plainer than words how deeply he hated Julian, but he did not pursue the subject further. He had already studied it in all its bearings. His idea of Northern character was that it was utterly devoid of honor. He readily saw at what an advantage Julian would have him in case prosecution were resorted to. The very fact that Julian was a Northern man would tend to secure his, Ellis’, conviction, on the ground

that, should he be acquitted, the Northern press would raise the hue and cry of lawlessness in the South, and that Northern men were subjected to outrage from which there was no legal protection.

That Julian would, if the occasion offered, urge the prosecution to the bitter end, he did not doubt. Such a course would comport with the Northern notion of honor. Therefore, in view of all the probabilities, Ellis had shrewdly chosen to bide his chances for some surer mode of vengeance.

When the carriage had gone by, Julian found himself absurdly wishing for some means of finding out what this hobnobbing between Ellis and those high officials could mean. His face actually reddened when the littleness of the thought flashed upon him. Why should he indirectly envy this man his rocketlike success? What was there in it to vex him?

He went to the counter and paid his bill. "I will go home and begin life over again in double earnest," he thought; but he stopped off at Calhoun and went to see Lay's Ferry, where in the course of Sherman's march he had had a hairbreadth escape. The battlefield of Resaca, too, was but six miles away.

He found much to interest him, many reminders of some hard fighting and exciting adventures. He went and stood by the blackened foundation-stones of what had once been a spacious mansion on an airy hill overlooking a broad plantation in a fertile valley. He remembered how that house came to

be burned. It was situated about two hundred yards from the Western & Atlantic Railroad, and from its high hill commanded the track. Some rebel sharp-shooters had taken refuge in it, and were galling the company to which Julian belonged. The order was given to charge the hill and fire the house. Julian, then a mere boy, was the first to reach the spot. He attacked the door with the butt of his gun and broke it in. As he did so a young woman fired at him with a pistol, the ball lightly creasing the top of his head. He was enraged and rushed at his fair assailant with levelled bayonet. She retreated and escaped, but not before he had slightly wounded her in the arm. He then lighted a match and set fire to the house.

Now as he stood gazing at the ruins pathetically clothed in their wild brambles and half buried in ashy *débris*, he fancied he could hear the thunder of the fight rolling away towards Snake-creek Gap. Below him lay the valley scarcely less a fenceless ruin than when the army had left it charred and smoking after the battle.

He turned away, wondering what had become of the unfortunate family, and especially the young woman.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT THE OLD MILL AGAIN.

IT would serve no good purpose to describe the sad scenes at the old Chenier mill, where, amid her humble surroundings, Rosalie's sweet and patient mother died and was buried. Mrs. Roosevelt and her niece arrived just in time to receive the last words of the poor wornout woman. Just here the veil must fall; we shall let a week pass after the burial, before we again approach the thread of our story.

A period of six months sometimes has the power of transforming a life or of developing a character. Taken at the right point, a hungry human mind will be found as receptive and saturable as a sponge. In view of Rosalie Chenier's isolated situation up to the time of Aunt Marguerite's coming, and her slender means of education, it will easily be seen that one of her quick, inquiring turn of mind would gather valuable impressions from the varied scenes and constantly deepening experiences of life through which she had been so rapidly whirled; but the effect of all this upon her character, how it had elevated or depressed, broadened or narrowed,

sweetened or poisoned it, would be harder to reach. A child of the mountains, midway between the temperate North and the sultry South, strong, healthy, imaginative, she had seen the world first in the North under circumstances most favorable to vivid impressions. Chicago and New York are cities that bewilder and fascinate. A sojourn within their influence, if but for a day, has an immediate and life-long effect. A Southern person is especially sensitive to this charm. Rosalie had thoroughly admired the Northern spirit, its belief in the dignity of toil, its faith in the honor and wisdom of the free masses, its enterprise, its thrift, its free schools, its public libraries, its true democracy. This spirit had blown in upon her with the effect of pure air upon one who has just emerged from a narrow and unventilated place. Her whole nature had responded at once to its influence—had expanded, bloomed, enriched itself, as suddenly and as sweetly as the plant in the first fervid days of spring.

There was another and subtler influence, which to a woman means a great deal more than is generally admitted,—the influence of unlimited means for self-adornment, and perfect opportunity of observing other women's dress and ways.

It is often the case that luxury spoils a young man; but it is the true atmosphere for the perfecting of womanly growth. Mere physical development and the power to struggle against the opposition of the world are frequently the outcome of

poverty and galling privation; but the beautiful symmetry of feminine character, in its qualities most acceptable to man, is reached through that medium which wealth only can command.

Before leaving the "pocket," Rosalie was a beautiful, symmetrical, flawless vessel, ready for filling; she returned brimming with her treasure of experiences, but she was hardly more sophisticated than when she left. Grief for her mother, and that awe of death which falls upon the young with such mysterious power, had served to darken her first impression on returning to the dear old mill; and somehow, as the days went by, she found nothing of her former life coming back to her. She saw her father, sorrow-stricken and silent, her sister pale and broken. Here was the big cool waterwheel, yonder the stream, the hills, the slanting clay-red fields, the mountain-peaks, the blue sky; but where was the old joy in them? Everything seemed poor and pinched, little, stunted, lifeless. Even the landscape seemed caught in the crushing coil of the mountain chain, and compressed until there was left no breadth or freedom of expression.

One day, finding the hopper full of grain, she started the mill and essayed to resume her old duties and enter into their spirit. The rush of water and the creaking of gudgeons failed to make the music of former days. She could not even imagine the sweet delight that used to come when she felt the floor tremble in sympathy with the rasping buhr-stones. She stood by the hopper and

immersed her hands in the cool gold-colored wheat, well aware that she was striving to cheat herself into believing that no change had taken place in her which had broken her accord with these simple, crude surroundings.

Grafty Jones came to see her, a doleful expression on his face and a more intense angularity in his frame, as if he had lost most of the little strength and elasticity he used to have; but he sensibly refrained from alluding to his trouble, and even tried to make himself agreeable by asking her to tell him about her travels. To any young woman less sincere and direct in her sympathies than Rosalie, this poor fellow would have appeared absurdly comical; but she respected him for his honesty, and would have considered it worth great labor to cure him of his foolish passion.

Some days passed before Rosalie thought of showing her father the cross Julian had given her. She told him all the young man had said about Provence and Chateau Chenier. He listened and became absorbed, holding the dull gold cross in his palm the while and gazing fondly into the sweet saddened eyes of his child.

"Since I lost my limb," he said, in a melancholy tone, "and have been able to do nothing else, I have longed a great deal to go to Provence and see for myself."

"And shall we not go some day, papa?" She inquired, slipping her arm gently around his neck. He shook his head.

"Too poor, dear, too poor," he replied: "it requires a great deal of money to travel."

"But, papa, I am not poor; Uncle Roosevelt has settled an income of ten thousand a year on me in my own right!"

Colonel Chenier raised his head and gazed incredulously into her face.

"You will let me take you, won't you, papa?" she sweetly continued; "Aunt Marguerite says she will go with us."

He could not answer, but he took her bright head between his hands and kissed her forehead. Her voice was more than music in his ears.

"It is a long, long way, and I am growing old," he presently said; "but I do not regard this as my country now; I should like to live the rest of my days in Provence, and at last mingle my dust with that of our ancestors."

"We will go," said Rosalie earnestly; "we will go and see, even if we do not stay. Mr. Julian says he sat upon an old wall at Chateau Chenier and saw the moon come up from behind a hill crowned with olive-trees, just as it is described in the troubadour song you taught me. Mr. Julian likes all my little French songs."

Colonel Chenier looked calmly askance at his daughter, and wondered if this Mr. Julian had touched her fancy.

"I wish I could see your young Northerner," he presently said; "you have made me like him; is he agreeable, is he handsome, Rosalie?"

"I hardly know how to answer. He is kind, affable, polite, and I am sure he is honorable; but one can hardly call him handsome. He's a great big, strong man, broad-faced, deep-eyed, and, I think, remarkably intellectual."

"How does he feel toward Southern people? Is he a radical?"

"Oh, I heard him make a political oration in Chicago which was intensely antagonistic to the South, but he seems liberal; he and Uncle Roosevelt have grown to be great friends; and you know Uncle Roosevelt cannot tolerate a radical."

"Has he made a very warm friend of you, Rosalie?"

"Oh, yes, I like him very much," she spoke with emphasis.

Colonel Chenier smiled. It was the first since the death at the mill.

"You haven't let him convert you to the Yankee idea, have you?" he inquired, toying with the cross, and throwing a little touch of pleasantry into his voice.

"No, not that; but I like the North, especially the West; and the people up there are delightful; they are so much in earnest, so thrifty and industrious, and yet so kind and hospitable. You'd like Chicago, papa, I know you would, and you'd like Mr. Julian too."

"Perhaps, perhaps," said Colonel Chenier in a tone of doubt. "I suppose he is too young to have been in the Yankee army."

"Oh, he was with Sherman all the way to the sea," said Rosalie quickly; "he remembers all the little towns along the line of march; he spoke of Dalton, Resaca, Calhoun, Kingston and Marietta; he was a mere boy, but he went through it all."

A grim, ashen shadow settled over Colonel Chenier's face as her words called up the memory of his burned-up home and devastated plantation, his slaves set free and his fortune dissipated by the breath of that army of Sherman's.

"He was one of the house-burners and woman-insulters then, perhaps."

"Oh, no, he wouldn't do that. He's too much of a gentleman to ever have been guilty of such acts," she quickly exclaimed, her voice full of earnest faith in the young man's innocence. "He is a proud, honorable, conscientious man, not at all what I had imagined a Northerner to be; but, in fact, papa, *all* the Northern people are different from what we have thought them; they are really charming."

"They were infernal vandals when they marched with Sherman, no matter what they are now. Why, don't you know that one of them stabbed Adelaide in the arm with his bayonet?"

"But he was some low-down hanger-on of the army, or some beastly foreigner; he could not have been a representative Northern man."

"They were all of a piece; they stole with one hand and carried the torch in the other."

Colonel Chenier was growing excited, and Rosa-

lie artfully changed the subject of conversation. She inwardly resented having Edgar Julian classed with the common vulgar soldiery ; but she did not wish to antagonize her father. She felt sure that if Julian could have a talk with Colonel Chenier he would win a way to his respect. A sense of high duty urged her to present the young man to her father in the most favorable light, but innate maidenly modesty forbade any unseemly haste to become his defender. It would be hard to discover, and still harder to define, the amount of advantage that the simple fact of Julian's visit to Provence gave him in holding his own in the estimation of both Rosalie and Colonel Chenier ; for, although the latter had never seen him, the cross, and his words at second-hand from Rosalie, were sufficient to win for the young man a favorable prejudice in the old soldier's heart. Still there was a great barrier to pass. Colonel Chenier nursed an implacable hatred against the men whose acts — in his judgment altogether unjustified by honorable rules of warfare — had rendered him almost a pauper. The chains of poverty galled him and kept alive his enmity towards those whom he habitually called Sherman's thieves. Against them he charged up all the toil, privation and humiliation of these " reconstruction years " through which he had dragged himself, a pitiable and despondent cripple. He often said that the man who shot him in battle, if he could ever find him, should have his forgiveness and friendship ; but the vandals who burned his house

and assaulted his daughter, who devastated his plantation and enticed away his slaves, should never be recognized as fellow-citizens by him. Fortunately his was an isolated case, comparatively, and his sentiments were not representative of the feeling of the Southern people as a mass. Already the cry of "Onward, upward," was ringing from the lips of the young politicians of the old Empire Cotton State, — and the old fossils of the Calhoun period were being laid upon the shelf as curiosities.

Aunt Marguerite used Colonel Chenier's season of grief to the effect of bringing about a reconciliation between her husband and her brother. A trouble had arisen between Mr. Roosevelt and Colonel Chenier over political differences many years before. One had been a whig, the other a democrat. They had come near fighting over the question of the war with Mexico. Mr. Roosevelt ardently opposed the war policy, Colonel Chenier just as fervidly defended it. The result was a rupture. So, after the great calamities of personal disfigurement and hopeless poverty had fallen upon Wilton Chenier with the ending of the rebellion, Mrs. Roosevelt had labored hard to bring these two foolish enemies together. Her husband finally consented, but Colonel Chenier, her brother, rejected the offer. Now she had adroitly approached the latter under cover of his domestic bereavement, and had reached his heart while it was laid bare. Rosalie added her sweet influence, and the stern

man was conquered. In short, the result was, as we have said, a reconciliation.

It was finally agreed that the remains of Mrs. Chenier should be taken up and removed to Savannah and entombed in lovely old Bonaventure, and that the Chenier family should go to Roosevelt place, to remain there until preparations could be made for the trip to the ancestral estate in Provence. Aunt Marguerite cleverly humored this Provençal dream, whose fanciful threads had, as she discovered, wound themselves about the imaginations of father and daughter ; she made everything serve her turn, in fact. Rosalie had become her idol, and to keep that idol near her was her constant solicitude and study.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT THE SPRING AGAIN.

IT was not until after the agreement had been made touching the abandonment of the old mill, that Rosalie began to feel something of her early love for the "pocket" returning in the shape of a tender, sorrowful regret. She clambered along the little stony path up to the spring where she used to sit and read the romances and poems of knightly days; but she took no book with her now. It was with greater difficulty than formerly that she surmounted the big fragments of mountain stone and the mossy logs that lay in the way. Her neatly fitting black dress was not fashioned for such freedom of action; and then, perhaps, these months of in-door life and physical restriction may have eliminated some of her birdlike lightness of movement. As she passed along under the green pines and red-brown oaks, she heard a cardinal grosbeak whistling shrilly, and some blue-jays were chattering in the thickets along the hillside. The brook brawled over its stones and slipped across its sandy shallows in the old happy way. The sharp fragrance of pine resin, and the fine, rare odor of liquid-amber gum, filled

the air. How long ago it seemed, that last time she was here, and what a world lay between then and now! She sat down upon the gray lichen-blotched stone where Ellis had found her when he was skulking from the detectives. It was with a thrill that she recollected that meeting and what followed. The tall, handsome, brigandish fellow, armed to the teeth, firm, alert, ready for a daring deed, had left a strong romantic impression in her memory. Along with the thought came its fragrance, so to speak, and she felt a warm blush of maidenly shame tingle in her cheeks at recalling the mysterious pleasure his loverlike actions had given her. She rested her elbows upon her lap and hid her face in her hands. Just then a rich, manly voice called her name.

“Rosalie!”

It was so infinitely tender and musical!

She looked up quickly, with a great throbbing in her breast.

“Rosalie!” it repeated.

Ellis stood before her, dressed in a short gray jacket and loose trousers, a brown sportsman's shirt and a dark scarlet scarf; heavy top-boots and a wide-brimmed brown felt hat completed his attire, and he bore in his right hand a long alpenstock, whilst on his left shoulder was slung a light rifle. There were those same fearless dark eyes, the olive cheeks, the drooping mustache, the firm, well-set chin, the tall, strong form. She almost leaped to her feet; then, feeling a sudden weakness, sat down again.

"I dreamed last night that you would be here in this dear place, and I have come all the way over the mountain to find you, Rosalie." He said this slowly, with a vibration in his voice that gave it great power.

"You ought not to have come," she responded, meeting his eyes with an appeal in her own, and throwing something almost of bitterness into her tone. "I did not want to see you."

"Why, Rosalie, why?" he exclaimed, sitting down near her; "what have I done to offend you? Tell me, tell me!" He was already growing pale.

She sprang to her feet; she was weak no longer; her eyes flashed.

"You are a murderer, an assassin, and dare to ask me what you have done! You who struck Colonel Talbot in the night when he was —"

"Miss Chenier!" he exclaimed, rising as he spoke; "what do you mean?"

She looked steadily, passionately at him. Presently she cried, —

"What do I mean? You know what I mean! O Mr. Ellis, I could not have believed you so wicked!"

"Rosalie, — Miss Chenier, — you are certainly laboring under some horrible mistake," he said in a hoarse voice, and involuntarily taking a step nearer her. "Won't you explain —"

"Let your own conscience, if you have one —"

"Miss Chenier, I do not know what you mean," he emphatically cried.

"What I mean ! what I mean !" she disdainfully repeated.

"Can it be possible," he slowly exclaimed, as if something were dawning upon his mind, "can it be possible that you are accusing me of doing that injury to Colonel Talbot from which he is still so mysteriously suffering? Good heavens, Rosalie!" he added after a few moments of silence, during which time his eyes did not turn from her face, "how terribly you are wronging me!"

Her eyes searched his with an intensity that nothing but utter innocence could have withstood, it would seem, and yet he bore it without a waver. He seemed, indeed, to meet it and welcome it.

"I would rather you would kill me outright than for you to insinuate so awful a charge," he went on, feeling the poverty of language in so great a need. His voice began to gather up its fascinating sweetness and flexibility.

Rosalie faltered and trembled as the magnetism of his unshrinking face overcame her. She sank down upon the stone pale and exhausted.

He was by her side in a moment.

"Explain this mystery, this dark, horrible insult to my honor, Rosalie!" he pleaded, speaking rapidly and passionately. "How could you get such a thing into your mind? Who has been poisoning you against me by hinting such a malicious and unfounded accusation?"

"No one," she said; "no one. I—I thought you did it."

"But how *could* you?" he impatiently cried; "I can't see how you *could*. What ever started you to thinking it?"

"We saw you following us," she said, scarcely above a whisper.

"Following you — us — whom do you mean?"

"Colonel Talbot and me," she answered.

"Following you *where*?"

"That night in the street — the night he was hurt."

"*Following* you the night he was hurt! Why, Rosalie, I was not *in Savannah* that night. I did not know he was hurt till I saw the papers next day. I was at Jessup that night."

There was such a ring of surprised and injured innocence — such a reproach in his voice — that she felt her heart shrink and flutter.

"If you are innocent — if I have wronged you — forgive me!" she exclaimed. She rose as she spoke, and for a moment stood before him in a faltering attitude. "It may all be cleared up some time. I cannot see you any more until it is. I hope you are innocent, but, but — I — I believe you are guilty."

He sprang up. The pallor in his face was awful. His eyes shot clear flames. His cheeks and forehead seemed to shrivel.

"It is a lie! a damned infernal lie! I will not bear it!" His lips were flecked with froth. "And this from you, Rosalie!" he cried; "from you whom I love more than all the world! My God, *can* you believe this! If all the world were marshalled against me to believe a lie, I would turn to you for —"

"Hush!" she said, almost sternly; and yet the regretful gentleness broke through her voice. "Hush! if you are innocent, time will prove it. Go back to Savannah and solve this mystery. Go back and find the true murderer or would-be murderer of Colonel Warren Talbot, and then I will hear of your friendship, and not till then!"

Her words seemed to have the power to spin him away to an infinite distance from her. He recoiled as if she had stabbed him. For a moment he hesitated; then in a dry, strange voice he said, —

"If the villain who struck Colonel Talbot is above ground, I will find him." He turned about as he finished speaking, and strode away through the woods.

"Mr. Ellis!" Rosalie called out after him.

He stopped and looked back. She hesitated; she hardly knew what she wanted to say to him.

"Do not be angry, please," she quavered. "Never think of—of revenge again, will you?" Her voice was thin and mournful, like the cry of the drab vireo beyond her in the dusky wood.

A sort of smile shot across his bloodless face. He stood a mere point of time, then resumed his way and disappeared amid the trees. A strange drear silence followed.

Rosalie returned to the mill with a great weight upon her heart. She could not feel that she had done wrong, and yet she wished that the meeting could have been avoided. The pallid face of Ellis haunted her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AT LOVE'S GATE.

MRS. ROOSEVELT felt the need of hastening the departure from the "pocket;" but notwithstanding her efforts, it was toward the middle of February when everything was ready. There had been many things to do. Rosalie would not consent that the old mill should be sold, so Grafty Jones was put in charge of it and directed to see that it was kept in repair. Colonel Chenier's library, so rich in mediæval poetry and romance, was sent away in large boxes to Savannah. Rosalie assisted in the packing, and peeped into the old French tomes and manuscript rolls with something like her former relish. It seemed to her that every one of these contained some half-suppressed allusion to the land of her dreams. No doubt it was quite natural for her thus to cheat herself; for all the old romances were full of chateaux and olive groves and vineyards, where knights rode in pleasant lanes beside their lady-loves, or played the lute under the walls by moonlight, or galloped away to the wars with a warm kiss tingling on their bearded lips. And had not her father been reading these to

her from her childhood, and telling her about *Chateau Chenier*, and her knightly ancestors who dwelt in the land of the mistral and the troubadour?

What vivid pictures, too, the strong descriptive talks of Edgar Julian had given her of those crumbling walls, those fervid skies and those orchard-crowned, breezy hills! Her visions were none the less fair and enticing seen through the haze of her sorrow.

She did not go to the spring any more, for though she felt sure that Ellis had gone away, she shrank from seeing even the spot where she had witnessed his awful passion.

When the time at last came for going back to Savannah, it was not with any well-defined regret that she bade farewell to the mill and the little crisp valley. Adelaide seemed much affected, and quietly wept all the way over the mountain. Colonel Chenier suffered too, but he sternly controlled himself, even calmly talking with Aunt Marguerite as the carriage bore them through the devious way among the hills and gray-green groves of oaks and pines.

Grafty Jones bade them good-by with scarcely a quaver in his voice. He was so proud of becoming a miller that for the time he had no room in his little withered heart for any other emotion. He was standing in the door of the mill the last time Rosalie looked back; it was an almost meaningless picture he made, his thin angular form drooping a little, his long neck and small head shot out from

his shrunken shoulders, his straggling beard and hair unkempt, and his hat thrust back so far that it rested on his prominent shoulder-blades. He was not a representative figure, unless he was representative of the spirit of degeneracy that had fastened itself upon the lower classes of mountain-men since the war. These classes had been led into ku-kluxing, into illicit distilling, and now and then into downright highway robbery ; all of which was owing to the influence of such guerillas as Charles Terrell, Abram Tate, Captain Colquit and John Gatewood. In the last days of the rebellion the mountain region of Cherokee Georgia was a neutral ground given over to bands of prowling freebooters, made up of deserters from both armies, and the above-named men were their chief leaders. The ending of the war did not end the career of these outlaws ; it only made them more secret in their operations, and dwindled their chief exploits to horse-stealing, escorting wagon-trains of moonshine whiskey to a clandestine market, and to driving the negroes out of the mountain valleys. As a consequence, the young men of the region grew up to ride horses, to handle pistols and flourish knives, to drink, and to go on night excursions. Francis Whitcombe Ellis had come among these men to use them for his purposes. They immediately acknowledged his leadership. At the first election after the close of the war they elected him to Congress, but he could not take the test oath and was not allowed his seat. Then he went to distilling, and gradually

enlarged his operations, until he attracted government notice and was finally arrested. Such, in brief, is an outline of the circumstances tending to wither and degenerate the moral spirit of the people in those once incomparably happy valleys and mountain slopes of North Georgia. Grafty Jones might be taken as an instance or an individual expression of this degeneracy.

Descending from the mountain country by way of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, one feels the air momentarily changing until Atlanta is reached. Gradually the hills fall away, until at last they are mere undulations overspread, so to speak, with cotton-fields and vast fallow plats of broom-sedge. From Atlanta to Macon there is less change, the picturesque environs of the latter city showing some charming dells and bold, heavily wooded hills. The next sweep is down to the sea; you are conscious of the incline; old things begin to appear; the soil whitens into pallid sand; the woods are monotonous reaches of slender pine-trees. Presently you are in the swamps where the rhododendrons grow, where everything is rank and luxuriant, where the magnolias rustle their heavy leaves and the live-oaks spread their muscular arms.

The Roosevelt mansion had grown to be Rosalie's home, and she was like a child just returned from a long journey when she again found herself in her stately and spacious room. Adelaide was quiet and sad; but Colonel Chenier, taken unawares

by Mr. Roosevelt's cordial friendliness and hospitality, was tempted out of his gloom. He was naturally a companionable man, generous and courteous, and it required very little to draw out all his latent good qualities. He and Mr. Roosevelt met as though nothing disagreeable had ever existed between them; they talked over all their past lives, saving that they quietly ignored that unfortunate quarrel.

One thing curiously affected Rosalie. It was the absence of Edgar Julian. She had expected to find him at Roosevelt place, and she had counted much on the pleasure his descriptions of Provence and Chateau Chenier would give her father. To find that he was gone was a real blow to her.

"He would not stay any longer," said Mr. Roosevelt as they all sat at dinner; "I tried to prevail on him to make his home in Savannah, offered him a big salary, with leave to do general practice besides; but he seemed to have grown homesick or tired of the South. He got into a difficulty with young Ellis, too, and that made him miserable."

Rosalie asked no questions, — she did not care to hear further; but Mildred Fain told her all the particulars when they met. Poor Mildred, she looked like a shadow. The physicians were still hanging over Colonel Talbot, and still declaring his recovery quite possible, though as yet he had not regained consciousness. Rosalie felt herself in some sort to blame for all the suffering of Colonel Talbot

and Miss Fain, and keeping the secret of that moonlight walk enclosed in her breast had generated a sense of guilt which gnawed at her conscience.

"If Colonel Talbot dies," she sometimes thought, "I shall be accessory to his murder, — if not in purpose, still in fact."

It rendered her extremely wretched to hear Miss Fain talk, for, although she rarely mentioned her lover directly, all her thoughts tended toward him, and she evidently bore all his suffering with him.

The newspapers announced that Ellis had returned to Savannah, but Rosalie saw nothing of him. Sometimes she found herself wondering if it could be that he was innocent of the crime of which she had accused him. Such a thing was not impossible, and yet she felt sure that she could not have been mistaken in recognizing him as he followed her and Talbot, like a sinister shadow, on that lovely and never-to-be-forgotten night.

One day, about a week after her return to Roosevelt place, Rosalie was sitting at her window reading in one of her father's favorite romances, or rather she had been reading and was now idly gazing into the street below, when a carriage rolled slowly by. A servant in livery was driving. Inside were a noble-looking middle-aged man, a fair, plump, lovely girl, and Frank Ellis. She had seen this man once before, and knew he was Sir Edmond Kane; the young lady, as she rightly supposed, was Miss Ellen, Sir Edmond's daughter. Ellis seemed quite happy, as did also the others, their faces

smiling, their conversation apparently animated and free. The English girl was charmingly dressed, and her face, though not beautiful, was high-bred and fascinating, and her form was superb. A strange feeling crept over Rosalie as she looked down upon this passing group: it was like a breath of exquisite sorrow or regret; her heart seemed to fall low in her breast and flutter painfully. Some sweet thing her fancy had been nursing slipped away from her. Ellis turned his eyes toward the house. She retreated from the window for fear he might see her; then she sank into a chair and cried, she knew not why. Life seemed to her to be growing hollow and meaningless; its zest had slipped away, like a perfume from a withering flower. She began to be restless and impatient for the time to come round when she and her father, with Aunt Marguerite and Adelaide, would go across the sea; but the thought of the journey pleased her more on account of the distance it would give, than for any joy which it promised at its end. So the days slipped past, until at last a letter came to her from Edgar Julian.

"I did not get to say good-by to you," he wrote, "therefore I take the liberty to write this instead. I lingered along the road homeward among the battle-fields of Georgia and Tennessee; but I found no pleasure in what I saw. I seemed to miss something which would have made even the brown hills charming. When I crossed the Ohio River I met a great snow-storm, sent down from Chicago to

welcome me, and quite soon the ground was covered a foot deep with the white fleece of winter. Here the streets are all ice and snow-banks, and as I write the wind is blue with cold and is howling like a pack of hungry wolves. I am dissatisfied, and wish I were back in Savannah, on your uncle's wide veranda, with the salt air blowing over me and the palm-trees rustling their spreading fans hard by. I don't believe I am a Northern man any longer; the worry and hurry of Chicago does not satisfy my especial hunger. May I come back? I think I could be less trouble to all you hospitable and patient Southerners now; this great distance has brought out in strong relief all my faults and all your goodness. How infinitely warm and comforting, how perfumed and luxuriant, how breezy, how shady, how inviting, is the whole South, now that I have left it!

"I have the hot-air register wide open in my room and a big coal fire on the hearth, and yet I am freezing! Won't you and Mrs. Roosevelt please invite me to come back? I could run on errands for you, and make myself reasonably useful, and I would try and not be much in the way. . . .

"I heard Gerster sing last night, and Litta the night before; but I would rather be in that dim old parlor in Roosevelt place and hear '*La Mandore*,' my spirit is there now,—do you not often hear it rustling around in its favorite places? . . . I stopped at Calhoun and Resaca as I came home, and while there I inquired for the Chenier mill, and

found it was only thirty miles distant. The temptation to visit it was very great, but I resisted. I always do resist at the wrong time. . . .

“Frankly, I want to say that I am unfit for business since returning, and I think of nothing but how I shall get back to Savannah without offending my own sense of the fitness of things. I have been worse since seeing in a Savannah paper yesterday a notice, in the personal column, of your return to Roosevelt place. True the paper was two weeks old when I got it, but it had its effect all the same. . . .

“You will not be offended if I say that I find life a burden where you are not to be seen and heard. I want to talk with you and hear you sing; I have thought, since I came here, of a hundred things I forgot to tell you about Provence and Chateau Chenier, and I have wondered how I passed so much time with you and said so little. What did we ever talk about? I remember nothing, save our last conversation, and even that had no end—it was left in a mist. I told you I loved you, but I did not and could not tell you how deep and strong that love was, how it had become the very life of my life. My lips refused then, as my pen does now, to express how dear you are to me. Forgive me if this letter seems foolish to you. I cannot see my way to any better mode of action than this simple statement of the truth. I trust you to respect my sincerity, even if you must cast aside my love as something not worth your keeping.”

Rosalie read this in her own room, read it and re-read it, with a quickened pulse and a sweet sense of its half-hopeful, half-despairing spirit. It brought Edgar Julian before her, just as she had seen him last: his strong, handsome, truthful face full of passionate tenderness for her. She could not think clearly; her heart throbbed almost painfully. Adelaide came in presently, and Rosalie gave her the letter to read.

"Do you love him, Rosalie?" the sister asked, after she had finished.

"I—I—don't know," was the stammered reply.

"I think you ought to know," said Adelaide; "love is no light thing.—Is he handsome?"

"No, not very—not handsome as they describe handsome men; but he is tall and strong and noble-looking, and he *is* noble, great-hearted, true."

"I believe you love him," said Adelaide, gazing searchingly into Rosalie's eyes, "and I am sorry of it."

Rosalie did not answer. Her beautiful bright head drooped and her eyes filled with tears.

"I do not see how you can love a Northerner," Adelaide continued; "especially one who was in Sherman's army. Whenever I think of those ruffians who burned our home and reduced us to poverty, the gash in my arm seems to open afresh and I hate every soul in the North! Then poor papa with his wounds and his disfigurements—"

"Oh," moaned Rosalie, "I know, I know! Oh,

I wish I had never, never left the 'pocket.' Adelaide, I am so very, very wretched!"

Adelaide took Rosalie's head between her hands and drew it gently down upon her bosom. She knew what love was: a soldier's grave held one to whom her life had been pledged.

"Don't cry," she gently said; "if you love him it's all right, dear. It was wrong for me to say those hard things. It's all right; you mustn't mind my ill-natured words. You ought not to suffer on my account. No doubt Mr. Julian is a good and true man."

"Yes, he is," said Rosalie quickly, lifting her head and wiping away her tears; "he is just as honorable and good as he can be."

Adelaide still kept her hands clasping Rosalie's face between them with a gentle, loving pressure.

"But you do love him, sister?" she murmured softly.

Rosalie suddenly blushed. "I do not know if I love him," she naïvely said, "but I should dearly love to see him again. I—I think a great deal of him."

Adelaide felt the influence of her sister's freshness as she faltered trembling and bewildered in the mist of this great new experience.

CHAPTER XXV.

ADELAIDE RECOLLECTS.

ROSALIE found it difficult to know what she ought to write to Edgar Julian, if she ought to write at all. He had been so kind to her, and she respected his honorable frankness so much, that, even if she could not say she loved him, she felt generously anxious not to wound him. But she really longed to see him. He had filled a large space in her life, and had revealed to her a most interesting contrast as his ultra-Northern traits of character struck sharply against Southern obstacles ; not that she had traced and defined this contrast or drawn any conclusion from it, but she had felt his superior knowledge of affairs, his sturdy truthfulness, his faith in the future of America, his belief in the value and nobleness of labor, his genuine respect for the common people, and, on the other hand, his rich imagination and his tender eloquence. She could not realize the bitter memories nursed by her father and sister touching the dark struggle for the Lost Cause. She had no past to mourn over. The future and the present were hers. She naturally enough had fallen in love

with Northern ways. It seemed to her that the world was made for earnest, persistent people to take and enjoy; she believed in freedom as the war had fixed it—in free education, free thought, free men and women. She was not aware that Edgar Julian had influenced her to believe in these things; the doctrine seemed quite as much her own as the old Provençal cross; Julian had been simply a restorer of things lost—a reviver of things in abeyance. Rosalie keenly realized what her answer to Julian's letter must decide. She puzzled her mind to discover some happy way out of the dilemma. She asked herself over and over again, "Do I love him?" and just as often she shrank away from the responsibility of saying yes or no. Her heart trembled; she hesitated, faltered, dreamed. So the days went by while Edgar Julian shivered through the Chicago snow-storms waiting for a letter. He too was wrestling with a problem. He did not shrink from acknowledging his love,—he gloried in it; but he did not feel safe in rushing back to Savannah, nor did he feel content to stay away. A man in love must be allowed some latitude of foolishness; and we ought to consider that each instance of love-trouble has its sentimental peculiarities. Julian had uttered the simple truth when he wrote that he was "unfit for business since returning." No man could have been more pre-occupied all the time, more restless, more inclined to waive affairs aside and to give himself over to his fancies.

The letter he was waiting for was a long while coming, and when it did come it only gave emphasis to his difficulty.

"Your letter," Rosalie wrote, "has been here for a good while. You will forgive me for not answering it sooner, when I say frankly to you that I have been dreadfully at a loss as to my duty in the matter. I very much desire to be kind and good to you, but my selfishness has interposed itself all the time. On one hand I must not, I cannot, tell you to come back; on the other hand I should be delighted to see you and talk with you. I did not know, until I returned, that you had gone away, and I missed you so much that I became restless. You had better not come back, I think, for it would be unpleasant to you, unless you could repress and forget everything beyond our charming friendship. I prize you above all my friends, and, frankly, I hardly know why, unless it is because you have humored my selfishness and fed my Provençal fancies as no one else save papa ever has. I shall be very unhappy if I lose you, and yet it would not be right for me to make you hope for what might never come. I respect you too sincerely not to be precisely frank if I knew how; but I have vainly tried to make up some phrase or other expressive of my feelings. The best I can do is to say that I hope you will not come back till you have determined to be my good, strong, generous friend, and nothing beyond. I could not bear to have you come in any other way, and yet I hope you will

come. . . . Our little garden is full of flowers and the air is very sweet with their perfumes.

“Papa and my sister Adelaide are here with us ; we are going to Europe in July, — to Provence, of course. Aunt Marguerite is going along as guardian and chaperone for Adelaide and me. I am impatient for the days to run by. Won’t you write me and tell me those things about Chateau Chenier that you say you forgot to tell me while you were here? . . . I am sorry to have to refuse you anything ; but I cannot see how any good could ever come of permitting you to return, so long as you feel as you say you do. You wouldn’t enjoy being here, and that would make me very unhappy. . . . My century-plant is in bloom. . . . Give my love to Mrs. Largely.

“Your friend,

“ROSALIE CHENIER.”

Julian read this letter with a queer mist in his eyes. He could not find much comfort in its half-girlish, half-stilted sentences, and yet he would not have had a word changed for anything. He imagined he could trace Rosalie’s innocent frankness and freshness between the lines. He sat and gazed into a big blazing fire for hours after he had learned the letter by heart. Her elastic graceful figure and warm bright face came up before him ; he saw her gray-brown eyes and straw-gold hair ; he heard her low sweet voice. Did she love him ? He read the letter again, pulled his mustache,

frowned, smiled, read again, gazed into the fire almost fiercely, looked at his watch, went and packed his travelling-bag, and took the next train for the South.

A March wind was driving the snow in a level current along the prairies as this energetic lover was whirled away from Chicago. Julian could not realize that within three days he would be feeling a warm sea-breeze on his face, while a summer sky would bend over him and the perfume of flowers reach him on every breath. A great doubt kept coming up in his breast, like a dark wave, which he could not wholly thrust back. He muffled himself in his heavy fur-lined overcoat and tried to comfortably enjoy his impatience and uncertainty of mind. Sometimes he endeavored to imagine just how Rosalie would look when he should present himself all unexpectedly at the old mansion. He liked to make her blush and smile happily and look like a genuine sweetheart. The clack and clang of the cars and the talk of the passengers came into his dreams without disturbing him. He heard two catarrhal farmers deprecating the weather and the sorry condition of their cattle. A young married couple just behind him were playing with a bouncing fat rogue of a baby boy, making believe they were trying to keep it quiet when, in fact, they were advertising its sterling qualities as a crower and kicker. Now and then the train would stop at some forlorn, snowed-under way-station and the brakeman would sing out the

name, meantime holding open the car door and letting in a fierce, biting gust of winter. An old woman somewhere kept grumbling in a dreary monotone, between violent fits of coughing, about the coldness of the car and the frequency of the stopping, and "that 'are man, consarn 'im, 'at allus leaves that 'are door open."

When Julian reached the Ohio River a cold rain had taken the place of the snow. At Louisville he got into a sleeping car and went to bed. He awoke nearly down to Nashville. The sky was cloudy, but the rain was over. All day he sped through Tennessee. At Chattanooga he went to bed again, and got up in Atlanta. Then came a perfect day, without a cloud, — warm, dreamy, delightful. At every stop he got out to stretch his limbs and inflate his lungs. The sunshine affected him like wine. He fancied that as he got near to Rosalie the whole world grew genial and sweet with her influence. Several times he found himself humming "*La Mandore*."

A rapid flight from the lakes to the sea, especially in early spring, gives one the strongest possible impression of the difference between the North and the South. The sudden change of landscape, sky, temperature, manners, makes itself sharply apparent. The snow, the "blizzard," the pelting sleet and the wan frozen trees and fields are yet fixed in the immediate foreground of memory when one looks out upon palmetto fans and live-oak tassels, gay flowers and sultry sunshine. One

can realize how a butterfly feels when it emerges from the chrysalis state. It is a leap from the bondage of ice and storm and furs and howling northerners, into the liberal freedom of semi-tropical out-door life.

When Julian got to Savannah he went to the Pulaski House; he did not care to rush in unawares upon the household at Roosevelt place, especially since the Cheniers had come there. He sent his card to the house. An hour or two later Mrs. Roosevelt called for him in her carriage. She was glad to see him. Rosalie had gone to Jacksonville with Mr. Roosevelt, but would be back to-morrow. He was introduced to Colonel Chenier and Adelaide, and despite his predetermination to the contrary, was again installed as one of the household. You cannot live in a hotel in the South if your Southern friend has a house.

Colonel Chenier and Edgar Julian were on good terms at once. A mutual friendliness, a soldierly comradeship, a shaking of hands on common ground, took place between them.

Adelaide, while not avoiding him, was dignified and shy, seeming to view him askance, as if doubting whether she ought to trust him, or as if trying to overcome an impulse towards hating him. Julian, on the contrary, felt a warm interest in this dark, sad-faced girl at once, and he was not slow to show it. Against his kindly assaults reserve was a poor shield. Without seeming to be adroit or artful, he reached her womanly nature at every un-

guarded point. He assumed the place of a big, amiable, interesting brother, who meant to draw his sister out of her gloom.

Mr. Roosevelt and his niece were delayed a week in Jacksonville — a very long week of dreamy, drowsy weather, the flowers bursting out and the mocking-birds singing in every green orange-grove and dusky fig-orchard.

Julian prevailed on Adelaide to walk with him in Forsyth Park, and to drive with him to the several charming suburban resorts. He found her wiser in the ways of the world than Rosalie — quicker to catch hidden meanings in things — a strong, self-poised woman, in fact. If she was not strictly beautiful she was attractive, and gave him to see that she possessed a reserve of culture a little faltering on account of long disuse. He had seen a few such women as she would be with a little recreating experience, about the hotels and cottages at Saratoga — women from New Orleans, Charleston and Mobile — the representatives of a class that soon will have passed away — such as once made Washington society much more dignified and truly aristocratic than it now is or ever again will be.

One morning they sat together on one of the pine benches near the fountain in Forsyth Park, and by some chance Julian got upon the subject of his war-experiences, and after the fashion of ex-soldiers, told over many of his adventures. He had a fascinating way of presenting these personal reminiscences in the form of sparkling sketches. Ade-

laide recoiled a little now and then, but his coloring was so liberal to the South that she could not be affronted. She began to grow strangely used to him, if one may so express it: his face, his movements, his personal effect, seemed to antedate, in some way, her acquaintance with him. As he went over again his boyish freaks in the army, she saw him more as a boy-soldier than as a man, and he had a curiously familiar look.

A few Northern tourists were abroad in the park, sauntering up and down the shaded walks and dallying around the flower-decked fountain. Some mocking-birds were singing ecstatically in the tree-tops overhead.

Suddenly, without any definite forewarning, by one of those inexplicable cerebral tricks, Adelaide recognized Julian as that daring, devilish soldier lad who stabbed her with a bayonet and burned her father's mansion.

The knowledge came upon her as the apparition of death or some numbing calamity. The blood went out of her face, and she grew weak, trembled, drew her breath heavily, and clutched the back of the bench for support.

Julian instantly became aware of this change. He was startled.

"You are ill," he exclaimed; "what is it? I will call a carriage."

"No, no," she said faintly; "in a moment it will be over. It is a mere faintness. Do not be alarmed." She struggled bravely, and conquered

more than he dreamed of. Presently she smiled and added, —

“It has passed already ; it was quite sudden. Let us return, if you please.”

“But you are not strong enough to walk,” he insisted.

“Oh, yes,” she said, rising and standing firmly before him, “I can walk as well as ever. I am quite over it, I assure you.”

They returned to Roosevelt place, Julian lightly talking, and she answering in monosyllables.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FERVID LOVER.

THE two great divisions of the United States will always remain as such, — the North and the South. It makes no difference what may be said and done by statesmen or moralists or humanitarians, nor does it matter what changes may come in the general currents of public opinion. The line is a physical one. On this side is the North, on that side is the South. A millennium could not affect the arrangement.

“Lord, boss,” said a shrewd and aged negro once; “Lord, boss, de diffunce is ez plain ez de hide on my han’. De Nor’n folks bleegeed to be diffunt f’om de Sou’n folks, kase God-a-mighty doan make de magnole tree grow in no froze-up country. Blood-houn’ can’t track nobody in de snow. De cotton an’ de cane an’ de rice is no mo’ like co’n an’ wheat dan de Souf pusson is like de No’f pusson. Jest kase dey aint any mo’ slaves, dat no sign de place gone wha’ de slave use to be. Den dey’s nur thing yo’ can’t git ober, an’ dat is po’ white trash; dey’s sumfin’ in dis wa’m climate what make de po white man offel mean an’ triffin’. Co’s

de rich gentlem heah is mighty sight ahead o' you rich No'r'n man; coz he know how to be quality an' not make no 'lusion to it; dam fool rich No'r'n man black 'is own boots an' 'en brag bout how much money he got. Rich Sou'r'n gentlem ride in carridge and have col'd waiter an' do de hones' ting by de darkey, eben if he hab to w'ar paper collar to do it! Oh, to be suah, de No'r'n man right on pol'tics—but he talk too much an' do too little. No'r'n man say, 'Ben, yo' good ez enybody, I's gwine to gib yo' a farm an' a mule,'—but he nebber do it. Sou'r'n man pitch Ben a qua'r-dollar an' say, 'Ben, yo' lazy ole houn', bresh my coat!' It's allus gwine to be jes dat way Yo' needn't spose 'at I doan know. I's been up Norf many ob times, afore de wa' an' sence de wa', an' it aint no user talkin'—dey's a big diffunce.'

This big difference upon which old Ben so strenuously insisted exists to-day, and will exist a hundred years hence just as sharply defined as it did in the palmiest days of slavery. Connecticut can't grow a Southern man or woman any more than it can grow a pineapple or an olive. Florida or Louisiana can no more produce a Northern man or woman than it can raise spring wheat or winter apples.

Nearly all the remarkable traits of Southern character, good and bad, had rounded to full ripeness in Francis Whitcombe Ellis. He had the gift of oratory, the luxuriant, untrained imagination, the fierce love of fight, the ambition for

wealth, the mediæval notion of honor, no regard whatever for truth in the abstract, a perfect faith in the purity of women, an absolute punctuality in keeping his word, simply on the score of conventional honor, and a reverence for everything pertaining to Southern aristocracy, only equalled by his hatred of everything Northern and his high disdain of manual labor and all forms of mere bread-getting effort. To balance these characteristics, he was generous, brave, courteous to those whom he liked, tender-hearted, full of warm sympathies and laudable impulses, charmingly companionable, and possessed of the gift called "magnetism," by which he had made his way to his present wealth and power in an incredibly short space of time. He had been aided at every step by good luck, as such men seem always to be, as well as by the fine intuition of a born genius, if the mere power to control and combine may be called genius.

He loved Rosalie Chenier with a passion like intensified fire, whenever he thought of her; but once his thoughts turned from her, he did not love her at all. He was not fickle. He simply lacked the power to think of two things at once. He focussed his whole mind and soul upon whatever for the time occupied his attention.

Rosalie's direct accusation against him had stung his Southern sense of honor almost to the point of driving him mad for the time. He had straightway rushed back to Savannah, bent upon making plain his innocence. That she should think him guilty

of a vulgar assassination was more than he could bear. For a while his mental torture was exquisite. He went to work with enormous energy, trying to ferret out the real assassin. If only Colonel Talbot could speak, he might easily settle the whole matter with a word; but Colonel Talbot could not speak; he lay there dumb and unconscious, a puzzle to the learned physicians.

When Rosalie returned to Savannah from the "pocket," Ellis knew it, but he did not attempt to see her; he meant never to speak to her again until his innocence had been proven beyond a doubt. He admitted to himself that, in a way, he deserved this punishment, remembering distinctly as he did his foolish threatening words. But he had a large faith in the star of his destiny, — that is, in his luck, — and he spared no effort to get into the mystery of that unhappy night.

After a time Sir Edmond Kane came back to Savannah for a few days, and Ellis was flattered by the marked attention paid him by the English aristocrat and his fair daughter. His thoughts were turned from Rosalie and his investigation of the crime, and he gave Miss Ellen Kane his undivided attention. The English girl found him a charming companion, so attentive, so knightly, so full of ready expedients for rational amusement, and withal so delightful as a story-teller. Those days made a memorable spot in Miss Kane's life. She went back to England dimly conscious that she had almost loved an American. As for Ellis, he never

thought of her again, once she had passed out of his reach.

At length the day came when Colonel Talbot regained consciousness. It was while Rosalie was gone to Jacksonville, that one morning the newspapers made the following announcement:—

"A MYSTERY CLEARED UP.—COLONEL WARREN TALBOT RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS AND EXPLAINS THE MANNER OF HIS ASSASSINATION.—HE WAS STRUCK BY WAMSLEY, THE FORGER, WHO THEREBY GOT POSSESSION OF THE FORGED INSTRUMENT WHICH COLONEL TALBOT HAD ON HIS PERSON THAT NIGHT.—WAMSLEY HAS ESCAPED."

Those were the head-lines. Ellis read the account, and then hastened to Talbot's bedside to get confirmation of its details. Armed with such assurances as made his innocence absolutely unquestionable, he went forth exulting. He could not wait for Rosalie to return, but departed at once for Jacksonville.

It was dark when he arrived at the hotel in which Mr. Roosevelt and his niece had rooms; but the first person he saw was Rosalie's colored maid standing on a veranda. He went to her at once.

"Fanny," he said, "where is your young mistress, Miss Chenier?"

"She's in her room, sah.

"Can I see her?"

"I go see, sah."

"Here, Fanny, take this.

He wrote on a card.

"Give Miss Chenier that, and tell her I am waiting for an answer; and Fanny, fetch her answer here at once, — do you understand?"

"Yes, sah," said the girl, taking the card and hurrying away.

The veranda was on the second floor, and overlooked a garden on one hand and the street on the other; the green boughs of a water-oak brushed the gayly painted railings. Ellis walked back and forth restlessly, every moment seeming to drag itself by with the delay of something maliciously perverse. He was in one of his intense, fervid moods. His face was lighted as with a pale flame, and his eyes, so dark and fine, were glowing with the heat of passion.

When he thought he heard the servant-girl returning he looked around and saw Rosalie instead. She came rapidly to him and held out her hand. He took it with feverish eagerness, and in a half-stifled voice said, —

"Rosalie, I have come to show you the proofs of my innocence. You said I might —"

"Come into our parlor," she said, interrupting him; "you look tired. Have you just arrived?" She had already turned about and was leading the way to the parlor. He followed her, gazing eagerly down at the sweet warm cheek half turned to him as she swiftly swept through a long hall. She was dressed in black, which made her crinkled yellow hair look all the brighter by contrast. He thought

she had grown taller within these last few weeks; she certainly was more beautiful than ever before.

The room into which they passed was a small, bright parlor opening upon a broad balcony. She offered him an arm-chair, and flung wide the door to let in the perfumed evening air. He did not sit down, but stood in the middle of the floor with his burning eyes fixed upon her face. She could not look at him, and her heart was in her throat. His first words had revealed to her all he was going to say. She had turned pale, and despite her effort to keep control of herself, she was trembling a little.

"It was very, very wicked of me to say that dreadful thing about you," she said, in a subdued but perfectly clear and steady voice; "I was laboring under —"

"No, no," he cried; "you need not begin in that way. It was all my fault. I made that foolish threat. You had a right —"

"I had no right," she firmly said; "it was mean of me; but you will forgive me, — you have come to do that?"

"I have come to tell you how I love you," he exclaimed impetuously, "and to ask you to be my wife. O Rosalie, Rosalie, how I love you!"

She retreated before him as she would have done before a flame. She put out her beautiful hands and motioned him back. He stopped short, a strange change coming across his dark face. He was as handsome as man could be, as he folded his

arms on his breast and looked half-despairingly, half-triumphantly down at her. When he spoke he had all the magic of his voice under perfect control.

"Rosalie," he said, "you told me I might come back to you when I could prove my honor unstained. I bring it to you as spotless as —"

"I know, I know," she hurried to say; "I did you irreparable wrong. I shall never forgive myself, never."

"Don't talk that way," he exclaimed, "I can't bear it. You have done no wrong. You are all right. Let the past keep its troubles and misunderstandings; I want to be happy now. Rosalie, are you afraid of me? Am I so dreadful to you that you shrink from me in this way?"

His grave, gentle voice was full of persuasive music. He stooped towards her, his eyes growing cloudy and soft. Suddenly he flung out his arms and clasped her close to him, kissing her hair and her forehead and murmuring unintelligible things. She wrung herself away from him, her physical elusiveness seeming quite as pronounced as that evasiveness which had always characterized her conversations with him.

"You must not!" she said, in a sort of breathless whisper. "I cannot permit it." She actually pushed him with her hand.

In an instant a flash of resentment flickered across his face and he made an impatient gesture.

"Rosalie, I did not expect this from you," said he, slowly recovering his full height.

"Oh!" she cried, her voice thin and dry, "I did not mean to offend you; I don't want you to be angry with me — you —"

"I love, love you!" he exclaimed, letting the words fall heavily from his ashy lips, as if he were beginning to anticipate a dreary failure.

She looked beseechingly at him, her hands hanging loosely intertwined before her.

"I love, love you!" he repeated.

"I wish you did not," she replied, something of the old freshness and naïvete ringing through her troubled voice. "I am so sorry to see you suffering."

He stood awhile in a hesitating attitude, then with a great effort he said, —

"So it has come to this! Rosalie, Rosalie, must I go away wounded to the heart and die all alone somewhere? I cannot believe you mean it; you will not kill me, Rosalie, will you?" The frenzy of despair rang through his shaking, appealing voice.

"No, no, you wrong me!" she cried; "you will not understand me. You refuse to see that I would have you be my friend — that I honor you — that I despise myself for having suspected you wrongfully — that I never can make amends for the injury I did you."

"I don't want to hear that," he said imperiously, "it displeases me. You cannot appease me in that way any more than you can satisfy your own true heart. Rosalie, you cannot spurn such love as

mine. You will keep it,—it is priceless.” He spread out his arms again. She fled through the doorway, and stopped on the balcony in the bright slanting moonlight. He too became motionless. As they stood thus confronting each other a perfumed breath from a blooming orange-tree wandered over them; a soft murmur came up from the great lazy Southern river. Ah, the South, the sweet, treacherous, dreamy, voluptuous, illusive South! The panting of love is on every breeze that comes, the sigh of deep despair is on every breeze that goes! Ellis felt that all his bright hopes were wavering in the balance, and the ecstasy of his suspense brought out cold drops upon his forehead. He gathered all the passion of his nature, and his words came from his lips with thrilling power: “Rosalie, is this the end of it all? Don’t you love me? Is my life at last to be a failure? Do you drive me away? Must I go? My God, and I love you so!”

She stood white-faced and speechless, the moonlight shimmering on her hair. The palm of one hand was turned toward him, raised almost to her shoulder as if to ward off his burning words. Her black clinging dress outlined her strong, softly rounded form.

“Must I go,” he repeated; “Rosalie, must I?”

“Yes—I—think you had better go,” she said, her voice even and spiritless.

He staggered as if she had smitten him, drew his hand across his forehead, turned and walked from

her to the door. From there he looked back, wavered, then turned again and disappeared. Words cannot suggest the force of such passion as his, — a tropical storm in violence, a mountain torrent in strength. He was wild, crazed, blind with despair. He tramped slowly along the hall, biting his lips, his eyes flashing. At the stairway he met Mr. Roosevelt, who, though evidently surprised to see him, held out his hand and greeted him cordially.

“Go to hell!” he muttered in response.

Mr. Roosevelt did not catch the words; he looked after Ellis in blank amazement, as the latter mechanically descended the stair without having touched his hand.

Rosalie was crying when Mr. Roosevelt entered the parlor, and the old man guessed what was the matter. When he put his hand on her head she sobbed, —

“O uncle, take me home, please, — I am very, very wretched.”

“Don’t cry, my dear,” he gently said, still keeping his hand on her head; “I have come to say get ready. Our train is due in a half-hour.”

He could not think of any soothing phrase. He regarded her as a mere child, knowing at the same time that she was a woman, and suffering now a trouble which besets the path of all beautiful women.

He procured her an apartment in a palace car, but she could not sleep. She reached Roosevelt place pale, hollow-eyed and nervous.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REALITY AND ROMANCE.

WHEN Adelaide Chenier discovered that Edgar Julian was the man grown from the boy who had stabbed her and burned down the dear old Chenier homestead, the blow was a hard one. That Rosalie loved this man she could not doubt, and her own experience told her how disastrous disappointment might be; and yet how could she suffer this vandal, this murderous Hessian, this house-burner, to marry her sister? She had never known how to call a Northern soldier by any milder name than robber. The scar on her arm where the fluted bayonet had passed through would burn like fire whenever she thought of that memorable, terrible day in May, 1864, when weak and bleeding she sat under a tree hard by, and saw that intrepid boy-fiend apply the torch to the grand old home. He had already stabbed her and driven her mother, half-frantic with terror, into the wood. Who could ever forget his face, his air, his energetic, forceful movements? His features were enthusiastically bright, he seemed to glory in destruction. To Adelaide's morbid imagination he seemed, as she looked

back through the years, the type of all that was withering and blasting. She smelled again the bitter smoke from the mountain valleys where happy villages and embowered country-seats were melting to ashes. The cannon roared in the distance, here and there the muskets sputtered, the drums and trumpets clashed and blared. It is not easy for one who has not had Adelaide's experiences to justly appreciate her present dilemma. Women who fall in the way of an invading, victorious, terribly earnest soldiery are lucky to escape with mere scars and the loss of homes, brothers and sweethearts; but these losses are none the less hard to bear because further outrage and dishonor have not been superadded. If, when the war ended, wealth and comfort could have returned to those weary and defeated Southerners who had always been used to luxury, the blow would not have been so great; but after the fire and sword and rapine, came the slow dragging, nagging, tormenting days of utter poverty. As a comparative example, imagine one of the old aristocratic first families of New York city suddenly reduced to living in a little old mill-cabin, to dressing in coarse plebeian attire, to drudging amid sacks of corn and wheat for a mere right to live, — the vulgar associations, the narrow limitations, the dry, spiritless, lagging existence, the memories of the past with all its departed glories. Add to this, personal physical injury, disfigurement, the horrible insult to a sensitive nature of having home invaded and of seeing the old beloved roof-tree

in flames, and then the incomparable desolation to a household where a troupe of handsome brothers and sons are swept away and a stalwart father and husband is rendered a miserable, hopeless cripple for life without decent clothes with which to cover his poor wreck of a body. This is drawing the picture in tame outlines, without a shade or a touch of its awful coloring. The Southern armies were composed of the very flower of the manhood of that section; there was no foreign element, no imported soldiery,—every death on the battle-field darkened a Southern home. “Five hundred killed,” or “Five thousand killed,” meant so many ghastly vacancies in the family circles. It was no uncommon thing for a family to lose all its male members, from two to six in number, on a single battle-field. You can scarcely find a Southern household where mementoes of a dead soldier father, brother, husband or son is not treasured, or where some miserable crippled wreck of a once proud and chivalrous soldier is not seen in his cushioned seat, gloomily waiting for the end. Slavery was all wrong, the “lost cause” was a snare and a delusion, rebellion was a terrible mistake; but how can these truths soften the *post bellum* conditions? Mere patriotism in the abstract, laud it as we may, can never furnish material wherewith to fill the void places in the household and the ashy vacancy where once stood our childhood’s home. Ah, the old plantation, what was like it? The old Southern home, when will it be restored?

Adelaide kept silent and brooded over her discovery and its possible results. Her love for Rosalie was the flower of sisterly affection, intensified in its colors and perfume since the death of their mother. It was the thought of Rosalie that restrained her deep, burning resentment of this intimate nearness to Edgar Julian. Perhaps this resentment was intensified by Adelaide's knowledge of the young man's sterling character and her consciousness of a deep-seated regard for him in her own breast. He seemed a proud, strong, energetic, manly man, with lofty aims and a keen contempt for trickery and insincerity, — a man to be respected, even loved, without danger. His Northern characteristics, his vim, his moral intrepidity, his radical patriotism, had a strong influence over this ultra Southern girl, and she secretly dreaded to attempt to break it. She enjoyed his direct way of putting things, his hatred of shams, his assaults upon hereditary aristocracy; she even took a strange delight in the torture of his war reminiscences.

One day he said to her, —

"It is a shame, the way we had to destroy this lovely South in order to perpetuate the Union. Nothing short of the knowledge that the government is forever safe could console my conscience for the part I bore in that terrible but glorious work."

He spoke as one who could not see the Southern side of the subject in any but the pathetic aspect of its physical bearings. Patriotism, as he viewed

it, blunted or obstructed his vision, so that he could not see beyond the mere gain to the republican idea. So at least it seemed to Adelaide. She did not retort. By a resolute effort she quietly said, —

“Maybe the government is not so safe as you think. Too much patriotism — if mere blind idolatry of a certain political creed can ever be so called — may be the most dangerous thing conceivable. Love of one’s country is one thing, and imagining that New England is the whole of this country is quite another thing.”

“New England,” said Julian with a good-natured smile, “is a little inclined to put on airs. We of the West are quite ready to help the South laugh her down, and hustle Boston off to the nation’s lumber-garret. State rights and negro slavery are not more dead than Boston’s old intellectual supremacy. Chicago and Atlanta have each a greater influence over the political movements of the day than Boston; whilst New York comes nearer being the Nation than the whole of New England. Oh, I guess the country is safe, Miss Chenier, and you would be charmed, even with New England, if you should go North. Your sister Rosalie liked Chicago immensely.”

The lightness of his tone and the ease with which he escaped controversy made it impossible for Adelaide to find fault with him. Then he fell into generous praise of the South, — its hospitality, its climate, its beautiful embowered cities; he made her forget the war and all its consequences. With

him all this talk was idle pastime while he was impatiently waiting for Rosalie to return. He spent many hours with Colonel Chenier, mostly discussing the Provençal inheritance and the legal prospect of recovering it. Once when Colonel Chenier suggested the propriety of his going with them to France as their legal adviser, Julian foolishly came near answering that if he could go as Rosalie's husband he would close with the proposition at once. What he did do was to frame an evasive response. He preferred to consult Rosalie in the matter.

Many times Adelaide was on the point of disclosing her secret to her father and to her Aunt Marguerite, but as often she recoiled from the task, uncertain as to what her duty was. The load grew heavier and heavier; the longer she carried it the more urgent became the necessity for throwing it off.

When Rosalie returned from Jacksonville she at once informed Adelaide of what had happened between her and Ellis.

"I am very sorry for him," she said; "he seemed so hurt, so desperate."

"Well, I am glad it is all over and you have sent him away," said Adelaide quite earnestly; "he is a bad man, and his attentions to you have troubled papa and me a great deal."

Rosalie sighed, and for a moment covered her eyes with her hand. His voice was echoing in her ears; no other voice ever was so full of tenderness,

so hauntingly persuasive, so pathetic, so despairing.

His face and form were before her in all the fascination of their evil beauty. To give him up was like parting with some forbidden thing whose chief charm lay in its subtle power to hurt. From her childhood or early girlhood he had been her knight. She had learned to watch for his coming and going in the valley, the clauquing of his horse's feet and the clang of his spurs and pistols fulfilling her romantic dreams. The dusk of mystery had always hung about him, so that no one exactly knew whether or no he had ever done any worse crime than illicit distilling; but this shadowy doubt left his past career subject to unlimited suspicion. He may have been a robber in those first wild days following the end of the war; he may have led the Ku-Klux Klan. At all events, there rested upon him the fascinating cloud of romance, and his personal bearing accentuated the dark hints set afloat about him. Rosalie's idea of love was one thing, and her experience with lovers another thing. Her life had been too slender, her opportunities too meagre, for her to have schooled herself, even to the slightest degree, in the requirements of society touching courtship and marriage. She had never paused to take a practical view of the dilemma which she had felt coming upon her from the first time that Ellis mentioned his love. To a young girl like her, just come out of utter seclusion into the light of the world, being loved is of itself a

most fascinating thing. If the lover is handsome and eloquent, the danger is that the unsophisticated and innocent maiden will fall into the irreparable mistake of accepting homage without ever dreaming of the result. There is but the space of a line between the heartless coquette who artfully snares a heart in order to torture it, and the blooming, innocent, happy young girl who, with wide-open eyes and dewy lips, destroys a life without knowing it. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish one from the other of the two, so perfect is the deception in one case, so amazing the sweet ignorance in the other.

"I shall never see him again," Rosalie said at last, lifting her face and looking at her sister with tearful eyes; "but I fear I never can feel sure that it was right for me to—to—for me to make him suffer so much."

"I think you have suffered more than he," responded Adelaide, "and he doesn't deserve your gracious solicitude. He will forget you entirely in a week."

"I wish he would—I should be happy if I could believe that," said Rosalie earnestly.

"Well, we must not pursue this hateful subject further," Adelaide said, rising and taking her sister's hand. "You haven't been treating Mr. Julian politely. He is anxious to see you; he has, I believe, come all the way from Chicago for no other purpose, and has been lingering here for a week impatiently waiting for your return. It is not right to avoid him in this way."

Here was a sacrifice of feeling on Adelaide's part worthy of a martyr, — a suffering for another profoundly Christian in its purity of motive.

"I know it is wrong," said Rosalie, "but I have suffered so greatly that I have been unfit to see any one; and—and—O Adelaide, I dread to see him!"

"This will never do," persisted Adelaide; "you shall not shirk the responsibility. I have exhausted all my stock of expedients for entertaining him. He roams around over the house as if looking for you. Come, you must go down. I promised him I would fetch you."

"Can't I have till morning? I am not fairly myself now. Tell him I am not quite well; that to-morrow I shall feel strong, I hope. You know what to say,—you will, wont you?" Rosalie's voice trembled and her eyes filled again.

Adelaide could not resist this appeal; so she went down alone and told Julian that Rosalie was indisposed and unable to see him, would be quite well by morning, she thought.

It was a bitter disappointment, but he had to bear it as best he could. No hours were ever heavier or slower. It seemed an age since he had seen her, and now this delay, with only a wall between them, had an ominous suggestiveness. When last they parted she had gone to her room leaving his passionate question unanswered. It seemed to him now that she had been in that room ever since.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A GLOOMY LOVER.

WHEN at last Julian saw Rosalie it was in some vague way a disappointment to him. She had changed, and yet the change was scarcely definable. Her mourning habit, a restraint and self-consciousness in her bearing, and a shy, lurking, half-suppressed look of dread in her face, affected him strangely. If possible, she was more beautiful than ever; but she seemed removed to a great distance from him, and suddenly the fear that he had lost her fell heavily upon him. He had become aware, since coming back to Savannah, of a more marked Southern flavor in all the surroundings. He had been stirring up here and there, without meaning to do it, little antagonisms of thought and feeling. The Northern tourists returning from the Floridian peninsula, flooded Savannah with a contrasting transient population that heightened Julian's sensitiveness to the irritating elements of Southern life and opinion. In fact, his heart failed him to a certain degree at finding no immediate response to the enthusiasm with which he had fled from the ice and snow and boreal winds into the warm blooming

- South. Where were the smiles and the sweet words of welcome he had come so far to find? After all, it looked as if he had been cheating himself with a rosy dream as baseless as ever a dream could be. His first conversation with Rosalie was tame enough. He framed awkward excuses for having come back so soon and with so little to encourage his visit, and slyly upbraided her for the paradoxical phrasing of her letter; but he could not get to his desire.

She was gentle and sweet as ever in voice and manner, the reserve and wariness adding to the charm of her mysteriously clouded eyes.

"I feared that you would be off to Provence before I could get here," he said, looking curiously at her, a hesitating smile on his genial, generous face; "I never did see cars lag so; and then, when I at last got here and found you gone away, I felt like a masterly failure."

"I did not know you were coming," Rosalie answered; "and I did not know you were here until I returned."

"Well, if you can forgive my unseemly haste to get back we shall be good friends," he lightly exclaimed, stumbling after some way to reach his old ease with her; "I feel guilty of accepting my own invitation to make this visit."

"Why, I am sure my letter was a model of—"

"Yes, I know," he interposed, laughing a little; "you urged me most eloquently indeed, but I fear you did not mean all you wrote."

His voice had a ring of cruelty in it, as if a pain lay at its root. He was aware that she was setting herself to resist any attempt on his part to assume the old intimate relation.

"Yes, I meant all I wrote," she said; and, although she smiled, there was an unmistakable chilliness in her tone. "I really thought you ought not to come."

"Why?" he asked, putting up his hand to stroke his mustache.

"I hardly know," she replied, a little nervously. "I thought you might regret it. You would be sure to be disappointed."

"Why should I be disappointed?" he exclaimed; "and if I am to be, the sooner I know it the better."

They were in the bay-window. The wind from the river was rippling over them rich with mingled perfumes and sharp with the saltiness of the tide. The rows of trees in the middle of the street were resonant with the songs of the mocking-birds.

"You are disappointed, you know it now," she quickly said, looking up into his face; "you must not try to deceive yourself."

"That would be impossible. It is you who persist in blinding yourself. Suppose we quarrel," he went on, lightly chafing; "it would break up this ice between us. Coldness is not natural in this climate, is it?"

He wondered at his own artificiality as much as at her merciless directness.

"There is no ice," she gravely answered. "You imagine it, as you imagine—a good many other things."

"Do I?" he exclaimed. "Ah, you know too well I am not here mistaking myself. You know—"

"Come, I shall not listen. Let us talk as we used to, of what you have seen, of what you have read. In your letter you said there was something about Chateau Chenier you had forgotten to tell me."

And so she drew him away from himself.

When their talk was over and she had left him, he sat for a long while in a state of doubt. It was hard for him to believe that she would thus turn him adrift, and yet he could discover no good reason why she should love him. He somehow felt as if he had allowed the golden time to go by, and that now she had slipped away beyond his-reach.

A week passed, during which the spring came on to its fullest beauty, wrapping the old city in luxuriant foliage. There was a delicious languor in the air, an almost purple splendor in the sky. The mocking-birds sang incessantly about their nests in the fragrant twilight of the groves.

Slowly the Northerners slipped away, leaving the streets still and colorless, save where the masses of bloom overhung the walls or gushed through the trellises. As the heat grew the breezes strengthened apace, until a singing current of coolness followed the shaded streets and poured across the flowering parks. White sails dotted the broad ex-

panse of the river, whilst the level reaches of marsh meadows shone emerald-green in the sunlight. Everywhere the fervid spring of the low country was gathering its semi-tropical forces with which to usher in the long hot summer. Julian strove to shake off a lethargy which seemed to be settling in the very centres of his life. He languidly wondered why he could not any longer exert his will-power, his masterly personal magnetism. Again and again he rose, shook himself, and resolved to go to Rosalie with his love and his eloquence, and win by the sheer torrent of his passion ; but his resolution lapsed feebly, and he returned to his moody silence.

"After all, I cannot endure this rich, intoxicating climate," he one day said to Adelaide ; "I am too coarse and crude for its refinements of heat and bloom and fragrance. I must go back in time to see the yellow blossoms on the prairies."

"I am homesick too," she replied ; "a breath of mountain air would be sweeter than all the sea-breezes the Atlantic can afford. The dogwood trees are in bloom all over the foothills now, and I recall the odor of the sassafras-buds."

"Were you in the mountains during the war?" he idly inquired.

"Not exactly in the mountains. Our home stood in the Oothcaloga valley, but within full view of the Pine Log and John's Mountain ranges."

"Ah, I recollect that valley, — a lovely stretch of undulating rich red lands with a strong brook or

rivulet meandering through it. We had some desperate skirmishing in that region." He did not note her sudden pallor. "I shall never forget one place," he went on; "a great rambling mansion whose walls were covered with trumpet-vines and Virginia creeper; a picturesque old home, set high on a knoll among broad-armed oaks and gum-trees. We had to burn it. It was the only house I ever burned with my own hand. Some rebels had taken refuge in it, and they fought like fiends. Even the women of the family were armed. A girl actually blazed away at me with a pistol as I smashed in the door. She slightly wounded me on the head, and was preparing to shoot me again when I pushed her off with my bayonet. I tell you she was a vixen!"

"If you should see that girl, do you think you could recognize her?" said Adelaide, her voice peculiarly even and steady. He was not looking at her, and so did not observe the change that had come over her dark face. His carelessness of tone and manner had struck her like insolence, even brutality.

"Oh, no," he replied; "she was of about your size and appearance," turning toward her, "but I can't recollect much about her, save that she seemed bent on killing me."

"And you burned the house?"

"Oh, I guess we did. Under cover of the smoke we planted a battery on a hill hard by, and gave the rebels in the valley an awful pounding as they slowly withdrew."

"And you would be unable to recognize the girl?"

"I shouldn't care to meet her if she's yet alive. She *might* know *me*. If she hasn't greatly changed she'd kill me on sight."

"You *ought* to be killed," she exclaimed, standing up before him and gazing contemptuously down upon him, "you miserable coward!"

She slipped up the sleeve of her dress, and, pointing to the jagged scar, smiled almost furiously as she added, —

"How dare you come into my presence!"

It was as if he sprang out of sleep to see the incarnation of his dream before him. He actually rubbed his eyes. There she stood, just as she had on the day of that memorable adventure. He could not find a word. He rose to his feet and confronted her almost belligerently, staring and pale. For some moments his mind was dazed and inoperative; then, as he gathered himself together, he said, —

"Miss Chenier, can it be possible — are you —"

"Yes, sir, I am —"

"Forgive me, I was a foolish, hot-headed boy — I would not do it now."

He stood like a statue. The situation was disclosing itself to him in all its hopelessness. He forgot that Adelaide stood before him. He reached out his heavy arms with his hands clenched together, and cried, —

"O Rosalie, Rosalie!"

There was something infinitely appealing in his

voice that thrilled Adelaide and touched her heart. Her conscience rebuked her fiercely. A space of silence followed, and then she put her hand on his arm and said, —

“I was too bitter — I was wicked, just now — forgive me!” but her voice had not lost all its pinched harshness. Her face still wore that look of lofty contempt. It was as if the sound of her sister’s name had turned aside the point of her anger.

“This is horrible!” exclaimed Julian, standing in an attitude of mingled surprise and despair, still ignoring Adelaide, his whole soul filled with the thought of how this strange discovery would affect Rosalie.

Adelaide saw his anguish, and with the swift sympathy of a Southern woman hurried to soften it.

“I will keep the secret, — I have kept it. Rosalie shall never know. Pardon my bitter mood just now, — it took me unawares.”

Her voice had recovered its gentleness almost as suddenly as it had lost it. This served to recall him to his immediate surroundings and to a sense of the generous sacrifice this injured woman was making. At the same time, by some indirect action, Adelaide’s impulse of kindness fanned to flame a sudden hope in his breast that all was not lost. His hungry heart caught at something in her voice that seemed to come from Rosalie.

“Miss Chenier, have you known this all the while?” he presently inquired.

"I had not meant to tell it," she said. "I am sorry I have allowed my feelings to get control of me. You will try to forget all about it, wont you?"

"And Rosalie," he murmured, "what will she say?"

"She must never, never know it," said Adelaide earnestly.

He took a hasty turn or two across the floor.

"And your father?" he added, stopping short and looking anxiously at her.

She made a quick gesture.

"He could not bear it," she exclaimed; "he would be terrible." She came close to him, and almost in a whisper added, —

"We must *never* tell *any one*."

Julian began to walk back and forth again, his hands locked behind him, his face pale and creased with intense feeling. She followed him with her eyes. His suffering appealed to her impulsive Southern heart more strongly, perhaps, on account of the share she had taken in bringing it on.

"Do you think it would be honorable in me to hold this a secret?" he said, stopping again and turning his clouded face inquiringly toward her.

Her cheeks flushed as the reflex of his question reached her own self-consciousness.

"I cannot say," she immediately replied. "I have thought it all over and over, and I have not decided. What do you think?"

He lowered his eyes, and stood for a time gazing

at the floor. Presently he looked up quickly, almost resentfully, and said, —

“I shall tell your father and Rosalie myself.”

She started a little.

“I believe I would not,” she said, speaking slowly, as if thinking with great care; “you might make it all the worse for everybody concerned.”

“But I must,” he urged; “no other course would satisfy my conscience.”

“I suppose you are right,” she said with a sigh, “but I dread the result. Wouldn’t it be better to wait awhile and —”

“No, at once. I should be afraid to brood over it: the temptation to hide the whole thing might overcome me. But you, Miss Chenier, — what shall I ever do to win back your respect? I cannot allow you to hate me, if I can help it. I feel your situation, and —”

“Let us not discuss that further,” she hurried to say: “we cannot change the past.”

“But we can mend the present — we can make the future. Miss Chenier, I cordially like you, and I want you to be my friend — will you?”

“Whatever I can I shall do for you,” she responded. And so they parted.

The situation had the effect to rouse Julian from his lethargy, and forthwith he set about trying to overcome the obstacles in his way.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DRIVE.

EDGAR JULIAN had been accustomed all his life to having obstacles fall down before his great strength of will and physique. Whatever he had wished for he had gone about getting in the directest and most irresistible way. He had never allowed the idea of defeat or failure to take shape in his mind. The winter winds, as they swept the snowy streets of Chicago, were not more energetic and tireless than he. So it may easily be imagined how strangely the sense of impending ruin to all his hopes affected him. The thought of not being loved by Rosalie was terrible when coupled with this dark discovery of the connection he had had with the ruin of her father's fortune and the embittering of her sister's life. He brooded over it as one who takes gloomy delight in self-torture. After the interview with Adelaide Chenier recorded in the preceding chapter, he began to grow excited, and consequently aggressive. He looked about him for some opportunity to end the whole matter by a sudden *coup*.

Mrs. Roosevelt saw that something had gone

wrong. It was plain to her that Julian's return to her house could have but one meaning, and she had hoped to see Rosalie become his wife, if she loved him. She did not inquire into the cause of the trouble which seemed obscurely at work, thinking that it would probably be of short duration.

One morning Mr. Roosevelt invited Julian to drive with him to a certain house, some miles in the country, where a trivial business affair demanded his attention. The vehicle was an open buggy drawn by a span of fast bay horses. Mr. Roosevelt drove.

"I shall show you some wild jungles and some beautiful open country," he said, as they started from before the gate at Roosevelt place. "If it were not so late in the season we might take the guns. Quails are abundant in the old fields."

"I shouldn't care to shoot to-day," said Julian; "somehow I feel averse to exercise of any active sort. This climate, it seems, has enervated me."

"That is what all Northern men say after they have been here awhile. How do you account for it?"

"I did not feel it when I was a soldier," responded Julian.

"But then you were not this far South, were you?"

"Oh, yes, I was here with Sherman's raiders, prowling about in the city for several days."

"Ah, I was not aware."

"I had forgotten to tell you," said Julian; "I

ought to have told you at first, so that you could have exercised your right to refuse hospitality to one who — ”

“Not at all, sir — do not mention it,” said Mr. Roosevelt quickly; “I hold no grudge against a Union soldier; I respect him, I assure you, sir.”

“So many things were done by our soldiery,” responded Julian; “things calculated to make Southern folk bitterly hate us.”

“Oh, yes; but an army is scarcely expected to have drawing-room manners. It would be wicked folly for us to allow what a man did as a soldier to be weighed against him as a citizen and a friend.”

“Yours is a noble view, Mr. Roosevelt,” said Julian; “I cordially agree with you; but there were special cases, like burning houses and destroying homes — ”

“I know, I know,” Mr. Roosevelt hastened to say; “but where one does not hesitate to kill a man, why ought he to turn aside from burning a house or sacking a town? Murder is said to be a higher crime than arson.”

“True; but I doubt if it is ever more bitterly resented. Have you noticed that the Ku-Klux Klan had its origin and flourished most in the regions where fire rather than sword had done its work? The fact is suggestive of what a subtle evil lurks in the ashes of burnt-up homes.”

“Our Southern people, I believe, have thought more of their homes than the Northern people have of theirs; and the reason may be found in the fact

that we are not so thickly settled, and consequently live more exclusively domestic lives."

"I had not thought of that," said Julian; "but I remember that as we marched through Georgia, we found more costly and elegant mansions in the country than in the towns. In the North it is quite the contrary; there most of the mansions are within the limits of the cities."

"Our wealthy planters and their families suffered dreadfully in the line of Sherman's march," said Mr. Roosevelt. "They lost their homes, their slaves, their plantations, — everything, — and came out at the end of the war even poorer than the crackers."

"Yes, I readily see their peculiarly hard fate," Julian said thoughtfully; "they were utterly unfitted for the great change; they had no knowledge of labor, and could not shift for themselves. It is a great pity that Sherman's march ever had to be made; but the government could not choose — the Union depended on victory, and victory depended on relentless, merciless warfare."

Mr. Roosevelt did not respond to this. He leaned to one side and silently watched the graceful movements of his swiftly going horses. The street into which they had turned was a suburban one, lined on either hand with picturesque old houses whose little dormer windows and big chimneys, dilapidated stoops and heavily panelled doors all weather-beaten and mossy, gave to every view much the effect of those sketches in gray washes our younger

artists like so well to make. Many of these houses were occupied by negroes whose ragged and happy offspring played and scampered in the dark sand of the street.

"I have just discovered something, Mr. Roosevelt, which greatly troubles me," Julian abruptly began again, after a long space of silence; "and it would oblige me if you would counsel me."

"I shall be very glad to be of service to you, sir, I assure you," said Mr. Roosevelt, looking up, with a cordial generosity beaming from his face.

"I don't know that you can do me any good," Julian continued, "it may be too far gone for that; but I desire to have your opinion."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," said Mr. Roosevelt, as Julian seemed to hesitate; "go on freely: anything I can offer will be yours."

"In the first place, then," the young man said, "I love your niece, Miss Rosalie Chenier."

"That would seem quite natural and proper, sir," said Mr. Roosevelt, smiling pleasantly, and speaking gently and slowly.

"In the next place," added Julian, "I have discovered that I am the very man who burned down Colonel Chenier's mansion in North Georgia as we were tramping and fighting through that region."

Mr. Roosevelt looked steadily and kindly at his companion, but said nothing.

"But worst of all," continued Julian, "I ran a bayonet through Miss Adelaide Chenier's arm."

Mr. Roosevelt drew up the horses so suddenly at

these last words, that they came to a stand-still in the middle of the street. The look on his face was one of great surprise.

"You cannot mean to say—" he slowly began; but Julian interrupted him.

"Yes, I do mean to say that I bayoneted a woman,—Adelaide Chenier,—and she has recognized me. Now, Mr. Roosevelt, what shall I do?"

This was so sudden and startling a revelation that Mr. Roosevelt could not respond at once. He touched the horses and shook the lines a little. They sped forth from the street into a shaded lane where perfumes of wild-flowers loaded the air. Jasmine vines covered the broken fences, violets purpled the ground, mocking-birds were everywhere. A gaunt old negro with a dilapidated army musket on his shoulder, stood withdrawn among the tree-shadows gazing at them as they passed.

"Can you fully realize my case, do you think?" Julian added.

"No, sir, I cannot. I never stabbed a woman in my life," responded Mr. Roosevelt. He shook the lines again, and the horses went still faster.

Julian's face darkened and reddened. He bit his mustache and glared at the dashboard. He could not understand the Southerner's cold, heartless manner so suddenly taken on.

"Mr. Roosevelt, I have spoken to you as a gentleman and a friend," he presently said; "I am in trouble and need counsel; I do not—"

"How can I advise you, sir?" the old man interrupted. "True advice presupposes sympathy."

"And you cannot sympathize with me, of course."

"I can hardly say; but I have liked you very much, sir. It is hard for me to couple you with acts of downright vandalism. You have impressed me as a chivalrous and spotless gentleman."

"I am not a soldier now, and I do not think and feel and act as a soldier. Of course, in the wild excitement of war I was a zealot in the Union cause. I am not sorry that I was, but I do regret that one act. I wish I could recall it."

As he spoke, Julian felt the emptiness of his words. They were flat, and fell dead on the air, as does the report of a fowling-piece on an open prairie.

"I should think it would not be a pleasant thing to remember," said Mr. Roosevelt, urging the horses a little more, as if this shaking of the lines served in some way to relieve his feelings.

Julian looked into that strong, almost Jewish countenance, and tried to read it; but its surface was impenetrable.

"But how can I help it now?" he presently said, putting his hand on the old man's arm.

Mr. Roosevelt did not answer; he only shook the lines again.

The horses were now going very fast, making the buggy bound and sway and its wheels sing keenly.

"One oughtn't to be hated for what he did—"

A loud report rang out beside the road just ahead. A negro had fired at a bird. The horses reared together and whirled short about with the buggy before Mr. Roosevelt could check them. Under the sudden strain, the spring over which Julian sat snapped in two, and the young man was sent whirling a rod away, falling heavily outstretched on some rails beside the road. A line also parted, and then the horses became unmanageable. They ran and kicked like demons, dragging Mr. Roosevelt, in the midst of the wrecked vehicle, back along the road towards the city. Julian was senseless.

The farther the horses ran, the wilder and more furious they grew. They dashed the buggy into shreds, and left Mr. Roosevelt, wounded and bleeding, a half-mile from where they started.

CHAPTER XXX.

"THANNE LONGEN FOLK TO GON ON PILGRIMAGES."

MILDRED FAIN came to call on Rosalie, bringing with her a great gust of cheerfulness. She was, in fact, so happy that she bubbled over with sparkling joyousness. Colonel Talbot had recovered his strength very rapidly, and had been out in a carriage with her. She had come to tell Rosalie all about it. Rosalie needed no telling; she had seen them go by, sitting so contentedly side by side, that the picture had lingered in her mind.

The shy, fluttering manner, so unlike Mildred's usual way, told how much she had suffered as well as how much she loved. Her face was still hollow, but the rich warm blushes lighted it up till it was more interesting than it used to be in its calm, non-chalant reserve when she was too proud to show her affection in any ordinary way. These two Southern girls were as unlike as could be in personal appearance and general disposition, but they both had the most notable Southern characteristics which would be in striking contrast with those of their Northern countrywomen. In the South, girls marry young, while yet the haze of mystery hangs

over all that lies beyond the gate of matrimony. Courtship is a sweet secret, wrapped in purple mist : hymen is something to be shrunk from, and yet is delightfully fascinating ; a lover is a man, like the lovers of old, who must woo with earnestness if he would win — so thinks, so is taught, the Southern maiden, who on the threshold of womanhood is as innocent and artless as a child.

Rosalie felt the charm of Miss Fain's little romance. Colonel Talbot's strange misfortune and his recovery had, no doubt, affected Rosalie more as a mystery, on account of her nearness to it, than it had Miss Fain, who viewed it merely as a calamity. But to a young girl, romance in connection with love is very interesting ; and both these girls, without fairly knowing it, revelled in the mystery as well as in the happy outcome of that strange episode. With her lover restored to her, Miss Fain could afford to be very confidential in her communications to Rosalie. She told her all about the arrangement for the nuptials. She was to be married in May. Deep down in Rosalie's breast a little drop of bitterness would rankle whenever she thought of Colonel Talbot's actions towards her on the night of his misfortune. Somehow she felt that she was guilty of something mean in not telling Mildred all about it, and yet she could not consent to transfer this trace of venom from her own heart to that of her happy friend. Then, too, the poison had its fascination. She was conscious of a lurking charm in the thought that Talbot had acknowledged

her beauty and loveliness ; not that she was in the least coquettish, or inclined to seek admiration, but because she was a woman. In fact, her experience had taught her that she was to expect love from men as a matter of course. Ellis, Julian and Colonel Talbot had each taken his turn. She felt confused as much as fascinated, and the very thought of seriously responding to such appeals for her favor was overwhelming. She had known Ellis longest, and he seemed more of her own world ; then, too, there was an influence in his dashing, reckless career and in his personal bearing which appealed to her love of romance ; but in his presence she could not like him. On the contrary, Julian pleased her as a friend and companion ; she esteemed him as true and honorable, and his talk was always deeply interesting. But he had not that power of fascinating her ; he was not a knight, not a hero, — merely a good, strong, manly man. She had never attempted to analyze her feelings, but she was conscious of a sort of deep, quiet struggle in her heart as to which should be the master of her affections, Julian or Ellis. This was no voluntary process : it was deeper than her will, and beyond the reach of her reasoning powers. It was a rosy confusion, a fascinating tangle of doubts, into which, all unsophisticated, she had been led ; and now, as one in a dream, her thoughts but dimly outlined and her heart faltering, she groped her way, half in joy and half in fear, whither she knew not.

Mildred Fain, although too full of her own happi-

ness to give any direct attention to Rosalie's affairs, felt her friend's dilemma.

"You ought to be very happy, Rosalie, with two lovers to choose between, and both so handsome," she lightly said as they sat by the open window of Rosalie's room, with the sweet breeze pouring in upon them rich with perfumes.

"I should scorn to choose between them," Rosalie exclaimed, her face flushing quickly. "One must not cast dice for one's lover. Mildred, I do not love either of them. It is not a choice between them, but a mere question as to what I should do."

"If you don't love either of them there is no doubt about what you ought to do," said Miss Fain: "you ought to say so at once."

"I *have* said so; but, but—"

"They wont take 'no' for answer!" said Mildred, laughing.

"Mr. Julian will not," responded Rosalie.

"Then he loves you truly, Rosalie—you may be sure of it. If he did not really love you, he would get angry when you refused him."

Rosalie's face changed. She instantly recollected how angry Ellis had appeared when she sent him away from her at Jacksonville.

Mildred touched the dull gold cross on Rosalie's throat, and added, —

"You wear his cross yet.

"Oh, I promised Mr. Julian I never would take it off."

Mildred looked into her friend's fresh young face,

sweet as a dewy flower, and wondered at her almost infantile simplicity and truthfulness. Those wide-open amber-gray eyes, those red pouting lips, the straight nose, and clear white forehead flossed over with the pale yellow fringe of hair, were all so bright and tender in tint and texture, she seemed more like one of those lily maidens of mediæval romance than like a young American girl of this day. She looked strong, active, intelligent, and yet she seemed to be without that self-reliant force nowadays deemed so essential to womanly character. Not that she was weak or vacillating: she rather appeared to lack worldly knowledge and the advantage it affords. One could see at a glance that, whenever it should happen that her nature became fully aroused by a call upon its reserve of power, it would not be found wanting in any of the elements of true womanly greatness. She had not yet discovered herself; she was almost wholly unconscious of her own resources. She had scarcely more than dreamed of the fountains of passion within, ready to flow at the first opportune touch of love. She had learned all she knew of real life within a less space than a year. She had not yet found out how to keep secrets and to dissemble. Whatever she thought, came frankly to her lips, and whoever asked her confidence, got it. The rare fresh elements of her nature were only waiting to be fused and moulded by some crucial crisis. Every one who came near her felt this promise, this rosy chaos out of which a perfect, an

almost divine, fulfilment of womanhood might at any moment start. It only needed for the blow to fall which should break the limitations and supply the omissions that a lack of worldly contact had entailed. Her experiences so far had done nothing more than stir her consciousness and disclose the possibilities of her nature.

"I am sorry I ever saw Mr. Julian," Rosalie said in response to Mildred's last words; "somehow I feel as if I had worked him some great wrong, and he has been so very, very kind to me."

"You never did a wrong in your life, Rosalie; you could not," exclaimed Mildred; "you are the sweetest and purest person I ever saw. I don't wonder that they all love you. Why, I love you myself."

"But, in good truth now, Mildred," Rosalie very seriously said, "I wish I were away off somewhere in a secluded place where no one could find me."

"Now I know you are about to be in love. That's just the way in which it comes on, like the spring, with its preliminary haziness and doubtful warmth, when, as Chaucer, the only poet I ever read, says, 'Longen folk to gon on pilgrimages'—you are in the chaotic, doubtful, sentimental stage."

"And what is your stage?" said Rosalie, in a lighter way.

"Mine is thankfulness to heaven for hope fulfilled and prayers answered; I am too happy, I fear."

Silently Rosalie shared this fear, and once or

twice an impulse to throw herself upon Mildred's breast and unburden her conscience almost mastered her. Mildred thought she never had seen her look so lovely. Her cheeks were bright pink, and her whole countenance was abloom with tender color and expression. She seemed more like the fresh, *naïve*, innocent, wondering-eyed mountain girl than she had for months past. Miss Fain did not dream that this bewilderingly beautiful girl was just then recollecting Colonel Talbot's kiss with such vividness that it caused her to rub the spot on her hand where the unwelcome caress had fallen. Who knows how frail and thin is the wall between great happiness and abject misery? At any moment a breath withheld or a breath released may mean more than life or death. Rosalie did not divulge her secret, and Mildred went away happy. As a question of abstract rectitude, was this silence on Rosalie's part right? The best of persons may disagree touching it. One thing is sure, however, — it was more from intuition than from deliberate choice that Rosalie withheld the bitter truth from her older and more mature friend. It is a woman's maxim, "False in a small degree, false in every degree," — that there is no such thing as a mere chance impulse of unfaithfulness; and you will find this maxim, in some form taking shape along with the first vague stirrings of love.

After Miss Fain was gone, Rosalie went about the house restlessly, scarcely knowing why her heart would not let her be still. Once she was sure she

heard Julian's voice calling to her from the veranda, but when she went out there she did not find him; then a lonesomeness took possession of her; she wished he would return. At every sound of wheels she would go to the window with a little fluttering in her breast and a sensation of vague sweet expectancy. The mocking-birds were rioting in the trees about the mansion, and the wind was murmuring and sighing as only the winds of the semi-tropics can. The sunshine was almost hot as its rich gold splendors were filtered through the young leaves and green-gray tangles of Spanish moss. It made her think of the "pocket" to hear the bird-songs and to feel the drowsy swells and throbs of the weather. There were no clouds, and the swarms of swallows seemed to slide flat against the shimmering sky. She found herself wishing that she could sleep until the time came for her to go away across the sea. Could it be possible that within three months she would stand on the old wall at Chateau Chenier! The thought made a thrill and a glow flash through her nerves. Involuntarily she toyed with the old cross and chain, and then she thought of Julian. How good he had been to make that long journey into the South of France, all for her; and what a volume of charming descriptions he had brought away! Then there came in her breast an uncertain premonition, half-joy, half-dread.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BRINGING HOME THE WOUNDED.

THE negro who fired the gun that caused the disaster to Mr. Roosevelt and Edgar Julian, was a big, coal-black, kindly faced man, clad in rags, barefooted, and wearing the rimless crown of a straw hat. He had been so intent upon getting a shot at a robin that he had not heard or seen the approach of the vehicle. When he fired, an exclamation from Mr. Roosevelt and a grinding of the wheels as the buggy was wrenched around, attracted his attention just in time for him to see Julian whirled out and the horses tear away down the road towards Savannah. He had fired almost point-blank in the direction of the horses, and his vivid African imagination at once suggested that he had killed some one. He stood for a time stupidly enough, gazing, or rather glaring, at the body of the man outstretched on the rails by the roadside; his heart had jumped into his throat and his teeth were chattering with fright. Presently he looked hurriedly about in every direction, as if choosing which course to run, his first thought being of flight; but some sort of a piteous moan

from the man appealed to his generous heart ; then he faltered and wavered, took a few timid steps, and at last went up to the motionless body.

"De Lordy mussy!" he muttered, rolling his white-rimmed eyes ; "is I done kill de whi' man?"

He glanced wildly and furtively up and down the road ; then, holding his musket in one hand, he stooped and touched Julian with the other.

"Oh-oo-oo, what on ye'th I gwine do?" he moaned, trembling from head to foot. "Oh-oo-oo, boss, boss, open yo' eyes — what's matter, say, say, boss? Oo-oo-oo!" He shook Julian's limp shoulder, but got no response. Then he let fall his gun in the road, and dropped to his knees, wringing his hands and crying, —

"Lordy mussy, he done dead, he done dead, he done dead!"

The birds in the wild tangle beside the road sang merrily, their sweet medley joining with the negro's voice to drown the sound of a horse's feet galloping down upon the spot. It was Ellis, who had been out for a morning ride, now returning towards the city, dashing furiously along, as he always did, his broad-brimmed hat well down over his brows, his form erect, sitting in his saddle with inimitable ease and grace. He wore a closely fitting gray riding-jacket, and loose trousers of the same material thrust into handsome top-boots, whose spurs jingled as he rode. Such attire suited well his tall, lithe form, and gave a freedom of motion that enhanced his picturesque carelessness of appearance.

He drew up his horse so suddenly as almost to hurl it back upon its haunches, and in accordance with the old mountain habit reached back and took a pistol from his hip pocket, as he saw the apparently dead man with the negro kneeling beside him.

"What are you doing, you black scoundrel!" he cried, levelling the pistol.

"Oh, de good Lor', boss, doan yo' shoot! I done nuffin'—I's most dead now—I—I—I—oo-oo!"

He crouched down to the ground, gibbering and chattering and cowering like a frightened monkey.

Ellis leaped from his horse.

"Did you shoot this man?" he cried, glaring savagely at the trembling fellow and still dangerously fingering the pistol.

"Oh, I dunno, I dunno, I shoot, I shoot, a-a-at de bird, de robin, an'—an'—oh-oo-oo, boss, doan shoot de niggah!"

The young man glanced about and noted the curved lines and ragged scars in the road where the buggy had been whirled around and where the horses' feet had torn up the sand, and something of the truth flashed into his experienced mind. He stooped and looked into the face of the prostrate form, and then recoiled, as if from some great danger or some hateful sight. His agitation was but momentary, however. He turned to the negro.

"Here," he said, "get on my horse and go for a doctor, quick."

"B-b-boss, I—I can't—" the poor fellow began to stammer.

"Move, you black scamp, or I'll riddle you," cried Ellis, seizing him by the shoulder and thrusting him against the horse.

"De saddle—b-b-boss,—I can't r-r-ride *de de* saddle!" stammered the almost crazed negro.

Ellis hurriedly unbuckled the girths and stripped the saddle off the horse's back.

"Give me your foot," he demanded; and stooping he lifted the heavy black as if he had been a child and set him where the saddle had been. "Now go for the nearest doctor," he said, slapping the horse heavily on the haunch.

The negro grabbed reins and mane as the spirited animal sprang away down the road.

"If you don't get back here with a doctor in no time I'll kill you!" shouted Ellis after him.

Mr. Roosevelt, who was not dangerously hurt, saw the negro coming and began to make signs for him to stop; but he only rolled up his frightened eyes and cried out as he thundered past, "Git outer *de way*, yo' no doctor,—I's gwine fo' *de doctor*."

The dust and sand from the horse's feet flew into Mr. Roosevelt's bloody face. The old man tried to walk back and look for Julian, but found himself too weak and wrenched for the task; so he sank down by a tree at the roadside, hoping his young friend had not been hurt and would soon come along. He got out his handkerchief and

strove to staunch the bleeding cut on the top of his head.

Ellis fetched some water in his hat from the nearest pool in a swamp hard by, and dashed it into Julian's face ; then he lifted his head and held it on his knee. There was no blood and no wound discoverable ; but the face of the injured man was white as death, with a purplish cloud under the half-closed eyes and about the relaxed lips.

Ellis stroked back the red-auburn hair from the massive forehead and temples. There was a mere fluttering of life at the arteries. It was a picture worth preserving : the dark Southerner nursing his Northern enemy, chafing with gentle hand the brow of the only man who ever had struck him and lived to remember it. Ellis, in his generous desire to restore Julian's consciousness, did not note how time went by ; he was absorbed in ceaseless efforts to quicken the circulation of the blood and to urge the nerve centres to action. At last the young man's eyes opened, gazed vaguely at him and closed again ; then there was a heavy gasping, followed by a struggling effort to rise to a sitting posture.

"Keep quiet, help will soon be here," said Ellis in a kindly voice ; "are you very badly hurt?"

"Yes—yes—I am hurt," Julian murmured huskily, as one scarcely aware of what he was saying.

Ellis put the saddle under Julian's head, and got some more water with which he moistened his lips and bathed his temples. By a great effort he re-

moved the rails so that the bruised limbs could rest on the sand, which, being damp, was cool and refreshing. Julian breathed heavily and kept his eyes closed. Away in the distance a horn sounded for noon, some negro housewife calling her husband from the field to dinner. Ellis looked at his watch: the negro had been gone nearly two hours. He fixed Julian as comfortably as he could, and walked down the road to where it turned, thence he looked along a straight stretch to the distant spires and roofs of the city, half submerged in billows of variegated foliage. A man sitting under a tree beside the road attracted his attention, and he hurried to where Mr. Roosevelt was patiently and painfully waiting for assistance.

"Why, Mr. Roosevelt! Is it possible! Are you hurt too?" he cried, stooping over his quondam railroad rival, his voice and face full of tenderest solicitude.

"Ah, I am glad to see you, sir, I assure you," the old man said; "but I do not need help so much as Mr. Julian, I fear. He—"

"I found him back yonder a little way; he is badly injured, I fear. I sent a negro fellow after a physician. Did he pass you here?"

"Yes, sir, he was going like mad. I tried to stop him, but he paid no attention to me. How is Mr. Julian hurt—limbs broken?"

"I can't tell, — he is hardly conscious; but are you sure you are not seriously injured? What can I do for you? — let me help you."

"I shall be obliged if you will help me to where

Mr. Julian is," said Mr. Roosevelt, putting forth his hand.

Ellis lifted him to his feet and slowly guided him along the road.

Julian had somewhat revived when they reached him. At the same time a welcome sound of wheels and horses' feet greeted their ears. Two vehicles, a buggy and a carriage, came swiftly up, and a spry, smooth-faced old man descended from the former.

"Ah, bless me, bless me, how's this?" he quietly ejaculated, glancing from Mr. Roosevelt to Julian and back again, with the quick, keen look of a trained surgeon. Then he pounced upon Julian and began testing his pulse. He motioned to a young man who had accompanied him, and gave an order in an undertone. A medicine-case was produced, and a few drops of liquid from a phial were put into Julian's mouth.

The negro came up on Ellis' horse. He was a very haggard-looking African, but he smiled when he saw that Julian was not dead.

"Bress de Lor', but I's glad!" he muttered as he dismounted.

Julian was lifted into the carriage and placed upon cushions arranged to receive him, and Mr. Roosevelt was comfortably fixed on a seat by his side.

Ellis resaddled his horse, gave the negro two or three silver dollars, and said, —

"Now, you careless vagabond, the next time you fire across a public highway I'll have you hanged

to the first limb I can find. Take your old gun and be off!"

The black rolled his eyes wildly, and pocketing the money, said, —

"Yo' bet yo' life, boss, dis chile not gwine ter hanker for any mo' o' disher kind o' doin's. I's jes gwine ter set de ole gun ahin' de do' an' dar let 'r set, — dat's what I's gwine ter do."

"Well, see that you do," said Ellis, swinging himself lightly into his saddle and following the vehicles.

The negro picked up his old musket and shambled away into the wood. He was glad to get out of sight of the white men. He had had a hard time of it, wandering about in Savannah hunting a physician. Luck had seemed against him. He was directed wrong a time or two, and then when he did at last find a physician's office, the doctor himself was gone. But it chanced that when, after great tribulation, he found a doctor, Mr. Roosevelt's family physician was the one.

It was a terrible shock to the household at Roosevelt place when the injured men were brought in. Julian was carried to his room in an almost insensible state. Mr. Roosevelt's hurts were comparatively light, — mere cuts and bruises that might keep him in-doors for a few days.

Rosalie was standing on the stairway when the carriages came to the gate. She turned and ran up to her room, and from the window saw Ellis and three or four others lifting Julian, pale and appar-

ently dead, down from the cushioned couch in the carriage. The first thought that entered her mind was that Ellis had killed Julian in a duel. All her blood seemed to flow in upon her heart, and she gripped the window-frame for support. She saw, as through a glass darkly, that group of laboring forms pass into the house bearing the heavy, solemn load, and then she slid down to the floor and lay in a little dark heap over which her yellow hair strayed in loose, shining curls. She had not swooned, — she was too strong for that, — but a feeling of utter horror and despair had crushed her down as if by its mere weight.

When, after a long while, Adelaide came to look for her, she was still there, silent, tearless, numb, with the intensity of her suffering.

When she learned that it had been an accident and not a duel, and that Julian was not dead, her relief was very great; but there remained a nameless dread, and something in Adelaide's voice and manner added to her distress.

Adelaide had tears in her eyes, and she was wringing her hands slowly, as she began walking to and fro in the room.

"It is awful!" she exclaimed, in her calm suppressed way; "and O Rosalie, if he should die without knowing that I have forgiven him!"

"Forgiven him?" echoed Rosalie, "forgiven him for what?"

Adelaide stopped and looked strangely at her sister. True enough, Rosalie did not know. Ought

she to tell her? Perhaps it would be best; but she could not.

"We had a foolish disagreement," she presently said; "I will tell you sometime, not now."

"But he will not die—O Adelaide, he will not die, will he?" cried Rosalie, with a sudden gush of tears.

"I do not know, dear," the sister replied, her voice struggling to hold its even, gentle flow.

They stood there facing each other, their faces pale, their lips trembling, and their eyes shining with intense distress. They did not heed the balmy wind-tide flowing through the room, nor the song of the mocking-bird gayly falling from the tree by the window.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JULIAN INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO COL. CHENIER.

ELLIS left Savannah soon after Julian's accident, and immediately the daily papers were full of his doings in the gold region of Cherokee Georgia. Several of his new mines were discovered to be much richer than any of the older ones, and he was reported to be doubling his wealth by a few easy turns. The Atlanta Cotton Exposition was being discussed, and his name was one of the most prominent in the list of liberal donors and managers. He was also spoken of as an available candidate for high political honors. That gratuitous personal advertisement, so much coveted by ambitious Americans, seemed to fall to his lot without stint. The Northern journals took up his name, and pleasantly bandied it about, speaking of him as "Ellis the sun-land genius," "the Georgia child of fortune," and "Ellis the gold-king." His *coups* followed each other with astonishing rapidity, and his success seemed assured at each step. "He is a genius peculiarly Southern," wrote the correspondent of a leading New York Journal, "and for this reason, is more than ordinarily interesting. In the first place,

he has had the advantages of a youth spent in a sort of Claude Duval, dime-novel way, and of a manhood ripened in the adventurous atmosphere of moonshine distilling and personal outlawry. In the next place, he is extremely handsome in face and form, fashioned in the ultra-Southern, Texas-ranger mould. But above all, he is a brilliant, subtle, lightning-quick genius with a passion for money. I saw him for the first time a week ago, riding at full gallop down Peachtree street in Atlanta, dressed, *à la* Buffalo Bill, in slouch hat, top-boots, and a suit of Confederate gray. He sat his horse as if born to it, and was much gazed at. I interviewed him at the Kimball House last evening, and found him a good talker, a little inclined to swagger in a genteel way, with a rich, taking voice and a magnetic face. He seems capable of any amount of work, and has more irons in the fire than a Cincinnati speculator. He has accomplished wonders during his short career, with the prospect before him of still greater achievement. A witty woman, the other day, said he reminded her of an unfinished poem by Joaquin Miller, bound in government bonds! I think we shall see him in the political field before long; then, if I am not greatly mistaken, he will score his greatest victories."

Rosalie read many of these flattering notices, but they failed to affect her as anything about Ellis used to do. In fact, a queer letter which came from Grafty Jones to her father interested her more. It ran as follows:—

Deer Sur,—I hev a desire fur too git yoo to obleege me sum moar. It mout be, fur instunce, that I mout want too kut sum timber offen yoor land here, or I mout git a chance too rent sum of the ground to sum feller to raze grain. Now ez I haint got no Kontrac frum yoo in ritin, I purpoze the follern fur you too sine.

KONTRAC.

I ergree that Grafty Jones ma use hiz own plezur about collectin an sellen matereal offen mi land an outen mi ground an hee iz too pa me too thirds an keep wun third hisself, for too yeers frum dait.

If this here Kontrac soots yoo pleeze sine it meejetly ez I mout want too doo sum little tinkerin at odd jobs rite awa.

Give mi luv too the foax.

Trooly yourn

GRAFTY JONES.

At the urgent solicitation of Rosalie, Colonel Chenier signed the contract and sent it back to Grafty.

“The poor simpleton has got some visionary project into his little head about selling timber,” the Colonel said, “and I’m afraid it’s not right to indulge him; however, if you desire it, Rosalie, I will.”

“Oh, if the poor man can get any pleasure out of his narrow schemes let him do so, by all means,” Rosalie insisted; “there’s not much in his dry little life at best.”

“True enough; but he’d better stick to the mill and let well-enough alone. He can’t manage timber to any profit, I fear.”

"Oh, well, if it pleases him to try, it would be a thankless thing to refuse him. Let him do as he likes."

Rosalie felt some connection between doing a kindness to Grafty Jones and that lost period of her life when she could find pleasure in the dull routine of the "pocket." It brought up sweet memories of the old mill with its leaking fore-bay and mossy wheel, the grateful coolness of the impalpable spray from the flume, and the fragrant balsamic smell of sweet-gum and cedar; the red-bird's song in the morning, and the pewee's plaintive note from the dark hollow where the spring bubbled up among the stones. She felt like a real benefactor when she saw the contract signed and sent away with the mail; it pleased her to imagine Grafty's grimaces of gratitude upon receiving it.

Edgar Julian's hurts proved very serious, though the physician from the first pronounced them not necessarily dangerous to his life. He was compelled to lie in a constrained attitude and to submit to any amount of poulticing and dosing, which was very hard for him to bear. Colonel Chenier of his own choice became Julian's nurse and companion through his season of pain. When the young man was well enough to bear conversation they retold together their war reminiscences and adventures, Julian all the time circling around, without ever quite reaching, the one memory which of all others was bitterest to him. He tried from every direction to pave the way for a full con-

fession ; but whenever he neared the point Colonel Chenier would frighten him away by some indication of resentfulness. Julian's training as a lawyer had taught him the art of approaching a point by every manner of indirection and circumlocutory device. He tried to educate Colonel Chenier by gradual approaches, so that finally the strange and ugly truth, when it should be disclosed, would not excite any undue passion. He was patient, and he strove to be both wise and cunning. Of course Colonel Chenier did not dream of Julian's object ; but all the same he was quite refractory ; he refused to be educated up to Julian's notion of what was pardonable on the score of being military necessity or the legitimate result of the excitement and prejudice of civil war. He was a Southerner of the old school, a believer in the *ante-bellum* past, a worshipper of chivalry and the Lost Cause, a good hater of innovation. His pride went on high, old-fashioned stilts from which it would not come down for anything. When at last Julian did disclose his secret, it was with all the heroic swiftness and mercilessness of a surgical operation.

"Colonel Chenier," he said, "I am going to be well before long, and then I suppose I shall have to go back to Chicago. I feel that I ought to say to you, before I go, that I love your daughter Rosalie and desire to marry her."

Colonel Chenier looked grave, and did not reply at once. He was not taken by surprise, but the matter was of such vast import that, in his judgment, it ought to be proceeded with slowly.

"Have you Rosalie's consent?" he at last very deliberately inquired.

Julian moved painfully upon his bolsters, and thus gained time to consider of his answer; but he could frame no evasive phrase; he simply said,—

"No, but I hope to get it."

Colonel Chenier smiled grimly.

"Girls are very uncertain, sir, very uncertain. Perhaps I would better reserve consideration of the question until you are sure."

"No," responded Julian quickly, "that is just what I do not want you to do. I am sure, from reasons of my own, that I ought to know, before I speak further to her, how you would regard my marriage with your daughter."

"I regard you very highly, sir," said Colonel Chenier, "and, so far as I am concerned, should be proud to call you my son. It is for Rosalie herself to decide the matter."

Julian lay for a few delicious minutes, revelling in the exquisite charm of this announcement, forgetful, for the time, of all that yet lay between him and his heart's desire. Since his accident he had spent most of his waking hours, when alone, in thinking of Rosalie and conjuring up a thousand absurd reasons for her strange elusiveness. Sometimes he caught the sound of her voice coming from other rooms as she went about the house. She sent flowers to him every day; but as yet she had not come to see him, though Adelaide often had.

"I am glad you are not against me," he presently said; "I have been dreading you, terribly dreading you. It seemed to me so probable that you would oppose me — so natural that you would not like to have your daughter marry a — a — marry one of Sherman's men."

Colonel Chenier had been looking out of the window which opened near Julian's couch: he now turned his eyes upon the young man's face, and in a tone of warm good-fellowship said, —

"I am a Southerner, sir, but I hope I am no fanatic. Why should I object to you on the ground that you were on the other side? The war is over, and that issue is settled forever. A soldier, sir, honors those who honorably fought him."

"It is doubly noble in you to talk like this, Colonel Chenier," exclaimed Julian, "when personally you have suffered so much. Your home burned up, your fortune torn from you, and your physique wrecked; and then your dead sons, and —"

Colonel Chenier interrupted him with a gesture of command, and said, —

"All that fell from the hand of fate. War is a calamity. I hold no grudge. Let the dead past bury its dead."

"Can you make that sentiment good, Colonel Chenier? Can you bear up against every temptation to hold a grudge?" said Julian, trembling as he spoke.

"Yes, sir, I should call it unmanly to rake over

the embers of the war now to gratify personal spite. I hope I am on a higher plane," said Colonel Chenier.

"Then you can forgive the man who burned your house and bayoneted your daughter?" cried Julian, excitedly.

Colonel Chenier's face darkened. He moved uneasily in his chair.

"Ah, I see," added Julian bitterly, "you wouldn't care to shake hands with that particular soldier!"

"It was a dastardly, cowardly, dishonorable deed!" replied Colonel Chenier, "and not within the rules of civilized warfare."

"Was it worse than Andersonville?" said Julian with peculiar emphasis. "Was it worse than Fort Pillow?"

The two men glared at each other for a moment with flaming eyes and shrivelling faces. Colonel Chenier was not at all prepared for Julian's questions. The latter, after a moment, continued:

"I knew you couldn't keep up to your high standard, and make good your pretty theory of letting the dead past bury its dead, and all that. It's all very well till it comes home, and then —"

"No, sir," Colonel Chenier interrupted, "you are wrong. I admit you touched me at a tender point when you mentioned the burning of my house and the stabbing of my daughter; but I say to you now that I can and do forgive even those outrages — that is, I do not hold them a charge against the

individual who committed them in the name of war and liberty and national glory. A soldier is a mere machine."

"You had better be careful what you are saying," exclaimed Julian, his eyes gleaming strangely; "I shall hold you fast on every word. Do I understand you to say that you are nobly generous enough to freely forgive the man, if you could find him, who with his own hand applied the torch to the Chenier homestead, and thrust your daughter through the arm with a bayonet — is that what you mean?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply, "yes, sir, that is what I mean. A battle was being fought all around my house, and my daughter, in the supreme moment of excitement, fired upon the detachment that stormed the place. Of course she took the chances of war."

Colonel Chenier held his head high as he spoke, with the air of one who feels the grandeur of his sentiments.

Julian smiled incredulously, and lay for a moment eying the dark-faced, soldierly man, as if contemplating a spring upon him; then he said, —

"You'll take every word of that back in less than five minutes, Colonel Chenier."

The Colonel smiled and shook his head, saying, —

"No, you do not know me yet; you do not know the Southern people yet. We are much better than your newspapers represent."

"Well, permit me to introduce to you in person

the incendiary who burned your mansion and the ruffian who stabbed your daughter."

"Certainly, sir, whenever you can."

"I am the man."

Colonel Chenier laughed.

"You need not try to make a joke of it," cried Julian; "I swear to you upon the honor of a man and a friend that I am the very man."

"You!—pshaw, sir, the idea is preposterous!" Colonel Chenier said this with a great effort to be light; but he had caught something from Julian's voice that chilled him.

"Go ask Miss Adelaide,—she recognized me; she'll tell you who I am," the young man cried, impetuously gesticulating with the index finger of his right hand.

"Are you serious? Are you really sincere? Do you mean—"

"I am serious—I am sincere—I mean every word I say," Julian said with emphasis; "and I am anxious to know where your theory is now! Do you still think you can control your prejudice?"

Colonel Chenier looked at Julian for a moment in silent inquiry; then his dark face grew darker, and his eyes took on a strange gloominess.

Adelaide came in with a tray of cut flowers, jasmynes, roses, violets and geraniums.

"How are you feeling this morning, Mr. Julian?" she inquired as she put her brilliant and fragrant load on the table near his window.

"Oh, thank you, I am ever so much better—I

am enormously relieved," he exclaimed; "I have just unburdened myself to your father — told him who I am and what I did."

She glanced hastily from the young man's face to her father's, and a look of trouble leaped into her eyes.

"He does not think it possible that I am the incendiary and assassin both in one. He does not like to believe —"

"I think you are exciting yourself too much, Mr. Julian," she said; "you know what the doctor ordered." She gave him a warning look, and then turned to her father.

"I have forgiven him, papa, and of course you will too," she gently said, slipping an arm about the Colonel's neck.

"Oh, he promised me that before I told him," said Julian.

Colonel Chenier put aside his daughter, and, taking his crutch, left the room without another word.

Adelaide stood looking after him till he passed out of sight; then she turned to Julian and said, —

"It will all be right: I am glad you have told him."

"And Rosalie?" he exclaimed.

Adelaide involuntarily put her hand to her breast and in a faltering voice replied, —

"I—I don't know—I am not sure. We need not tell her, need we?"

Her voice had some subtle sweetness in it that touched Julian strangely.

"Yes, I shall tell her as soon as I can see her. Wont you get her to come in here? I so much want to see her. Tell her it would help me, make me well."

The dark comely woman stood before him a moment, her lips slightly apart, her dusky eyes fixed upon his face, her bosom swelling strangely. Julian had never before noted how beautiful she was. It was the dark splendid beauty of the old South, a beauty that suggested passion as fervid as the sun.

"Yes, I will tell her," she said at last, turning away; "but if I were you I would not divulge our secret to her. It could do no good."

When she had gone out, Julian sank back among his pillows, and found himself weak and faint. He had overtaxed his strength. The fever lurking in his blood from the irritation of his injuries had rendered him excitable. Then, too, he had brooded over his strange predicament to an extent that had touched him with recklessness. It was well for him that he could fall asleep. He awoke, feeling greatly refreshed, just as Rosalie came into the doorway. When his eyes fell upon her shining hair and beautiful beloved face, he felt his heart leap mightily. He put forth his hand and said,—

"I knew you would come, Rosalie;" and his face beamed joyfully.

She hesitated; her eyes would not meet his, and she did not speak.

"You don't know how I have longed to see you,

to hear you talk, to have you near me," he went on, still holding out his hand.

She came into the room and went to the table, where she stood for a time making some pretence of re-arranging the flowers Adelaide had put there.

"O Rosalie, Rosalie, how *could* you stay away so long?" he exclaimed, his voice husky and low.

She gave him a quick, half-frightened look, and the rosy bloom vanished from her cheeks, leaving them for a moment pale as marble.

"Are you getting well?" she asked in a tone indicative of great restraint, and as if every expedient for appearing at ease had slipped beyond her reach. As if at the sound of her own voice, the blood flowed back into her face, lighting it with a delicate freshness, and her sweet troubled eyes burned with a sudden underglow. Julian saw the cross on her breast rise and fall with the waves of her emotion. He reached his hand farther with an appealing gesture.

"Wont you shake hands with me after our long separation?" he said; and then, as she seemed to waver and hesitate before him, he fervently murmured, "O Rosalie, my own, my flower of all the South, come, you have eluded me long enough, — come!"

His voice, so low and passionate and masterful, seemed to thrill her as the wind thrills the flowers and grasses.

Was she about to place her hand in his? Was she about to swiftly stoop and kiss his forehead?

He felt the wave of a great happiness flow over him as a little breeze sprang in through the window and tossed Rosalie's shining hair about her forehead.

The footfall of the physician coming to make his call was a most unwelcome and inopportune sound. Rosalie started like a frightened bird, and with one quick, never-to-be-forgotten look into Julian's eyes, turned and glided lightly from the room.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE GOLD-MINE.

JULIAN got well very soon. His convalescence was so rapid that within three days from the date of our last chapter, he was able to sit on the veranda and watch the mocking-birds flit to and fro among the trees that shaded the street. Somehow he had drawn infinite happiness from the expression of Rosalie's face, or from some indescribable intonation in her voice, or from the atmosphere that she had seemed to bring with her on the occasion of her only visit to his sick-room. He smiled all the time, ate his food with a genuine Western relish for solid viands, and grew strong.

Colonel Chenier was much the same as formerly, — polite, entertaining, talkative, — but he never approached the subject of his last conversation with Julian.

Adelaide seemed shy and quiet, but Julian could not help seeing how her sojourn in Savannah was adding to her personal charms. She looked ten years younger than when he first saw her, — more cheerful, elastic, alert, — and her voice had lost a certain querulousness which had characterized it.

That her heart had thrown off its burden of discontent was apparent.

Julian tried to obtain little interviews with Rosalie, but she seemed not to understand his intent, and so allowed this or that trivial circumstance to thwart his plans. Instead of vexing him, this amused him, and he allowed the days to go by without any effort on his part to break the dreamy monotony of things, until he was able to walk without any artificial aid.

About this time Colonel Chenier came to him with a letter that he had received from Grafty Jones. It ran as follows:—

Deer sur,—I hev this da sent yu by expres a pakidge ov gole, which is on count ov findin a gole min in the spring holler abuv the mil. It is very rich. I send yoo too thirds an keap wun third miself cordin to that thare kontrac what yoo sind. Good jidges sa thet their is ez mutch ez too er three hunderd thowsen dollers in hit. So Ile mek a good thing offen the kontrac an sole yoo.

Give mi luv to the foax.

Ez ever

GRAFTY JONES

Along with this letter, or at least on the same day, had come a package of gold of about two hundred dollars in value. Colonel Chenier was excited. He wanted to know if such a contract, if contract it could be called, as he had signed and sent to Grafty Jones, would carry a one-third interest in whatever mineral wealth the pocket estate might contain, to the aforesaid Grafty. He had

not kept a copy of the paper, but he explained its contents in substance to Julian.

"If it is as you state, I hardly think the courts would construe the contract to convey valuable minerals," said Julian; "but I would not have you give much weight to my opinion until I have seen the paper itself. It may be a binding lease for mining purposes."

Telegraphic specials in the daily papers giving highly colored accounts of the discovery of new mines in several places, added fuel to Colonel Chenier's excitement.

"I must go and look after this matter," he said to Julian later in the day. "It may be possible that I have a fortune up there after all. I should like to have you go with me, if you will."

"It will delight me to be of service to you," Julian replied; and after a good deal of discussion it was resolved that they should go at once. Accordingly Colonel Chenier began preparations for the journey.

When Rosalie found that her father was going back to the old mill, she began to beg him to take her along. He flatly refused, saying that it would be a hurried trip, and that he could not be encumbered with her.

Julian, when he was about ready to start, went looking for Rosalie from room to room, and finally found her behind the curtains of a bay-window crying.

"I have come to bid you farewell," he said; "mv

time is short; haven't you something cheering to say to me?"

He did not notice her tears. The outer blinds were closed, and there was soft twilight behind the curtains.

"I shall come back or not, just as you say," he half-whispered. "I love you too much to stay near you any longer, unless, unless, — if you cannot and will not — if it is unpleasant to you for me to be here."

She hid her face in her hands a moment in her peculiar girlish way while he stammered and paused in his speech; then she looked up, and said in a breathless sort of voice, —

"You must not stay away — you must come back with papa."

"May I come back for you?" he eagerly asked, leaning towards her, his arms half-raised. "Will you be my wife, Rosalie?"

How sweet and shy and lissome she looked in that tender light as she tremblingly toyed with the Provence cross, and alternately lifted and let fall her wistful, happy gray-brown eyes! How could she speak with her heart throbbing wildly in her throat and her lips trembling so! But even this delicious silence could not satisfy Julian. He was too stubborn to reach forth and take her into his arms before she had expressly given him the right so to do.

"Your father is ready to go and is waiting for me," he said, with some obscure qualms of con-

science at thought of how nearly brutal this stubbornness was, "and there is but a moment. Wont you answer me, Rosalie? Must I go away without knowing that you love me, and without your promise to be my own little brown-eyed wife?"

He stooped towards her and put his arms out further.

"Come, come!" he whispered, and then she yielded. He felt her slip close to him and nestle her bright head on his breast; and as he clasped her tenderly he said, —

"After so long — after so many doubts and fears — O Rosalie, you are mine forever!"

"I have been yours all the time," she murmured with her old *naïvete* present in her voice; "but — but I didn't know it till I — I thought you were going to die!"

They were standing thus when Adelaide came in to tell Julian that the carriage was waiting to take him to the station, and that her father was ready and impatient to be off.

Julian released Rosalie and went to meet Adelaide, smiling proudly and joyfully. He took her hand and said, —

"I am the happiest man in the world!"

Adelaide looked up into his beaming face and said under her breath, —

"You have not told her?"

"Told her what?" he asked; and then he remembered. "No," he added; "but all the powers of the world cannot separate us now. She is mine, and I am hers."

She did not reply, but turned and left the room. Julian kissed Rosalie again and went away. He and Colonel Chenier had a delightful run through Georgia, from the lowlands to the highlands, all the resources of the "Empire State" passing under their view, — cotton-fields, rice-fields, potato plantations, corn, wheat, oats, rye, vast orchards of peach, apple and pear trees, old reposeful mansions, beautiful tree-shaded towns, — in fact, all the most striking features of the greatest State in the South, if not the greatest in the Union.

Julian saw things now with eyes made liberal by love. His heart beat in unison with the leaping, laughing, riotous Southern spring-tide, and he felt to the finest thrill the power and beauty of that favored climate. Love is to nature what the breadcrumb is to art: it removes all the defective spots and lines. A man happily in love would see flowers in an alkali desert and orange-groves in Sahara.

Time and again, as the cars with rhythmic clatter swept along through the sunny country, Julian found himself humming rapturously the words of the queer little ditty that Rosalie's pure voice had made so charming:

"La mandore, la mandore!
Ma voix est naïve, et, jeune encore,
Je pince — tra-la — de la mandore,
Tra-la, tra-la. de la mandore!"

Up in the mountains where the valleys were gay

with flowers,—at the old mill where the brook brawled and the wheels clashed and creaked, in the dark little hollow where Grafty Jones had found the gold-mine,—Julian went about wrapped in his love-visions.

It was little interest he took in the flowers above the earth or the precious metals beneath it. A man is not in love if his sweetheart's hair is not brighter than gold and her eyes sweeter than flowers to him ; and the stronger and purer and greater the man, the more perfectly will love master him.

Julian found it curiously charming to go about in the old mill and imagine how Rosalie looked when she was there as a mere mountain maid, fancy-free and wholly unsophisticated.

He went to the gum-trees she had often mentioned, and tasted the fragrant liquid-amber. He got upon the broken stone wall where, as she had told him, she used to sit and read the romances of mediæval days. The mellow rumbling and jarring of the mill, the sighing of the mountain wind, and the gushing of the flume, were as familiar to him as if he had known them from childhood.

Colonel Chenier's gold-mine proved to be a curious failure. When the boundary line of his mill-estate came to be run, it was found that a mere fringe of the rich discovery was his. The deposit was really on land adjoining Colonel Chenier's, and quite recently purchased by Francis Whitcombe Ellis.

“Durn the luck !” exclaimed Grafty Jones. “I

mout a-knowned hit ud a-turned out that a-way ! Durn me ef I ever could hev any luck ! Ef I ud find nothin' more 'n' a turnip, the durned thing ud be rotten in the middle, and stringy besides — durn the luck ! ”

Neither Colonel Chenier nor Julian could offer the poor fellow any consolation. In fact, Colonel Chenier was quite disappointed himself, although he treated the matter lightly.

On the way back to Savannah a misconnection of trains delayed Julian and Colonel Chenier a day in Atlanta. Here Julian found himself suddenly face to face with Ellis. Their eyes thrust and parried a moment, and then Julian said, —

“ Mr. Ellis, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generous kindness to me in my recent accident. I — ”

“ Not at all, sir, not at all, ” said Ellis, somewhat stiffly. “ I did nothing worth speaking of. ”

“ But you did, ” exclaimed Julian : “ under the circumstances your conduct was grandly noble. I don't know that you will care for it, but I feel like apologizing for — for — for that hasty thing I did. ”

Ellis turned his face half away, his chin elevated, his eyes nearly closed, and Julian continued, —

“ I don't want you to be my enemy : I want to leave the South without a single bitter memory. ”

Ellis now looked straight into the Northerner's eyes. Presently he slowly said, —

“ It is all right, sir, all right. I have been the loser all round ; but, but when a gentleman apologizes, it is an end of things. ”

The rich, deep voice of the Southerner thrilled and charmed Julian. There was something evil in it, but there was an immense reserve of something pathetically noble. They parted, and have never met again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE END.

WHEN Edgar Julian, after his return to Roosevelt place, told Rosalie of the interview between himself and Ellis at Atlanta, she felt a great load lifted from her heart. She had made herself wretched during his absence, imagining a meeting between the enemies in some mountain hollow, where Julian would be no match for his unscrupulous antagonist. With what dreamy contentment her eyes shone when the suspense was over and her lover was again by her side, can be imagined better than told.

Julian was in no hurry to tell her the dreaded secret of the war-time. He accomplished it by gradual approaches; but after all, there was nothing gained. Rosalie loved him, and the disclosure did not cause even a momentary shadow to fall on her sunny face. She only crept closer to him and shyly kissed him. Afterwards she went to Adelaide, and throwing her arms about her neck, murmured tremulously, —

“My dear, noble sister! He has told me all!” Her warm tears fell upon Adelaide’s cheek and neck.

They made a fine picture as they stood there twined together like dewy vines; and thus it was that love burned away the barriers of hate between the North and the South. Out of the ashes of the burned-up home and the scar of the bayonet wound grew the sweet flower of reconciliation.

The Southern summer came on apace. Dusky splendors hovered in the groves and avenues by night, and by day the waves of heat shimmered over the house-tops and along the silver river. The time was nearing when the Cheniers would embark for France. Julian finally prevailed upon Rosalie to set their marriage day early enough so that he could take her to Chicago for a few weeks before their departure for the land of the mistral and Chateau Chenier.

"I want to show you to my friends," he proudly said, "so that they may see how great has been my second victory over the South."

"It is not a victory," she quickly rejoined, "for you are my prisoner for life!" She put her arms around him to illustrate his captivity.

"Well, then," he said, "I want to show all of Sherman's boys how things have changed, and how delightful it is now to be captured in the South."

When Rosalie was once more in the North she found its fascination stronger than ever. The prairies with their seas of corn and vast plains of pasture, the thronged towns and the hum and hurry of industry and enterprise, seemed to clear her mind of the last trace of gloom. The whole country was hers!

Colonel Chenier and Adelaide are now in Provence. The question of Colonel Chenier's title to the Chateau is under investigation in the French courts; but Julian and Rosalie are drifting about through a honeymoon that has run for nearly two years. When they first reached Chateau Chenier they thought they should be content to stay there always. They climbed upon the old wall, and imagined they found the very spot where the Maid of the Mistral used to sit and play her lute while her lover was away in the Eastern wars. Julian pointed out to Rosalie the part of the garden where the peasant dug up the old cross. They drove along the country roads between the fig and mulberry orchards, where the barefoot peasant women were picturesquely grouped, and where the wild-eyed children were working bareheaded in the sun. It was a sweet fulfilment of Rosalie's dreams; but Julian grew tired of Provence, and they went to Paris, and then to Switzerland, climbed the mountains and breathed the sharp breath of the glaciers.

We leave them in Rome. When they come back to America they will probably vibrate between Chicago and Savannah. Julian has not become altogether a Southern man, and Rosalie cannot quite agree to the Northern winters, which would seem to be about all that is left to quarrel about between the sections.

The old banjo from the "pocket" is Rosalie's constant companion, and the present taste for banjo-playing among refined Americans leaves her free to

indulge in those merry old songs as often as she may desire, without any danger of shocking society ; for what was once the lyre of the ignorant and enslaved Southern negro, is now the lute affected by the most cultured and æsthetic circles of the great cities both North and South.

